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EXTREME TIMES CALL FOR EXTREME MEASURES.

They are the X-Men's special black-ops strike team, created to go places and do things the regular squad can't or won't. The members? The best trackers and killers the X-Men have to offer: Wolverine, X-23, Warpath and Wolfsbane. Their name? X-Force.

When the bloodthirsty, mutant-hating religious sect known as the Purifiers rears its head, the members of X-Force launch themselves into battle with claws out and teeth bared. But the team's plan is thrown into disarray when the Purifiers get their hands on Wolfsbane. X-Force must make moves to rescue their teammate and put down the Purifiers permanently — but the religious sect has plans of its own, resurrecting some of the most heinous mutant-murderers in history. As if that wasn't enough, the team also sees the return of a fan-favorite X-Man — though whether the X-Force will fight beside or against him remains to be seen.

Writers **Craig Kyle** and **Chris Yost** *(X-23, X-23: Target X, New X-Men)* and hot artist **Clayton Crain** *(Ghost Rider: Road to Damnation, Ghost Rider: Trail of Tears, Sensational Spider-Man)* propel *X-Force* forward in the explosive return of one of Marvel's most exciting and beloved teams.

Collecting *X-Force #1-6.*

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X-FORCE®

ANGELS & DEMONS

KYLE • YOST • CRAIN

VOL. 1

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-Crain-

X-FORCE

M-Day cut the mutant population down from millions to just under two hundred. Since that day, mutants had suffered deaths but not a single birth. But hope returned...in the form of an infant girl.

The mutant-fearing religious sect called the Purifiers reached the mutant child just days after she was born. They burned her city to the ground and killed every man, woman, and child they could find in an attempt to destroy the girl they believed to be the mutant Antichrist.

The X-Men's leader, CYCLOPS, assembled a strike team who would do whatever it took to save the infant and stop the Purifiers. This team was composed of the X-Men's best trackers and killers and was designed to cross the lines that X-Men wouldn't.

The team was led by WOLVERINE and called X-FORCE.

They succeeded in saving the baby but at a high cost. The alien Hepzibah was severely injured and the mutant Caliban lost his life. Since the completion of their mission, the Purifiers have gone back into hiding and the remaining members of X-Force have scattered...

Until now.

ANGELS AND DEMONS:

Craig Kyle and Christ Yost: *Writers*
Clayton Crain: *Artist*
VC's Cory Petit: *Letterer*

Irene Lee, Paul Acerios & Anthony Dial: *Production*
Aubrey Sitterson: *Assistant Editor*
John Barber: *Editor*
Axel Alonso: *Executive Editor*
Joe Quesada: *Editor in Chief*
Dan Buckley: *Publisher*

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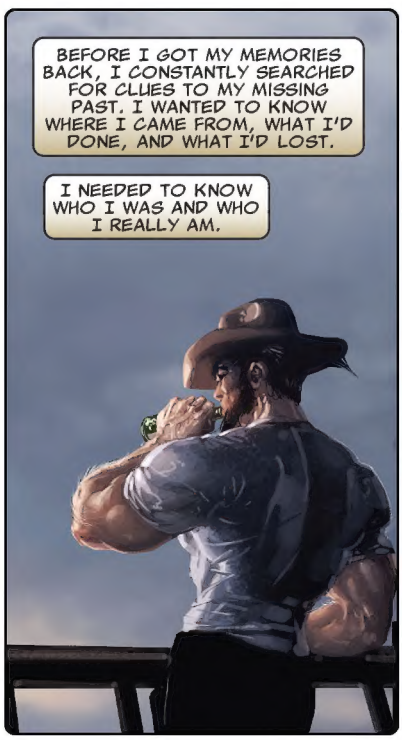
ANGEL'S AERIE, THE COLORADO ROCKY MOUNTAINS.
IF YOU'D ASKED ME TWO MONTHS AGO IF I'D EVER BEEN TO COLORADO, I WOULD HAVE SAID, "NO." YOU SEE, MOST OF MY PAST WAS A MYSTERY TO ME.
MY MEMORIES WERE ERASED BY A MAD SCIENTIST WHO HAD A NASTY BEDSIDE MANNER AND TWISTED IDEAS ON HOW WEAPONS ARE MADE.

RECENTLY, I GOT MY MEMORIES BACK AND IT WAS LIKE WAKING UP FROM A LONG NIGHT OF DRINKING: THE STUFF YOU CAN REMEMBER IS ALL PRETTY GOOD.
IT'S THE PARTS OF THE NIGHT YOU'D RATHER NOT KNOW ABOUT THAT YOU FIND OUT FROM YOUR FRIENDS THE NEXT DAY.


BEFORE I GOT MY MEMORIES BACK, I CONSTANTLY SEARCHED FOR CLUES TO MY MISSING PAST. I WANTED TO KNOW WHERE I CAME FROM, WHAT I'D DONE, AND WHAT I'D LOST.
I NEEDED TO KNOW WHO I WAS AND WHO I REALLY AM.

BUT AS IT TURNS OUT, I KNEW MORE ABOUT MYSELF BEFORE I GOT MY MEMORIES BACK. AIN'T THAT A BITCH.
LOGAN.

WHAT'S SINCLAIR DOING HERE? I THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO HAVE THIS LITTLE TALK IN PRIVATE.
I DO. RAHNE IS HERE BECAUSE...WELL, IT'S COMPLICATED.
OKAY. SO WHY AM I HERE?
SEVENTEEN HOURS AGO, A MAN TURNED HIMSELF IN TO A NORTH DAKOTA S.H.I.E.L.D. FACILITY...
"REVEREND MATTHEW RISMAN, LEADER OF THE PURIFIERS."
HE JUST GAVE HIMSELF UP?
WE'RE STILL FINDING OUT MORE DETAILS, BUT HERE'S WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR...

"HE MARCHED INTO THE BASE AND TOLD THE AGENTS HE WANTED TO CONFESS HIS SINS."
LATCHAM? WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?* I THOUGHT YOU WERE TRANSPORTING A PRISONER, I--
"BUT IT TURNS OUT, HE WAS JUST THERE TO COMMIT MORE OF THEM."
OH, GOD... LATCHAM, WHAT ARE YOU *THINKING?* YOU CAN'T BRING A *PRISONER* INTO THIS AREA!
GET THAT GUY OUT OF HERE!
"APPARENTLY, RISMAN HAD A *PURIFIER* WORKING INSIDE THE FACILITY."
I'M SORRY YOU PULLED *ARMORY DETAIL* TONIGHT, JOSH.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHO ARE THESE GUYS, I DON'T RECOGNIZE--
THP! THP!
"LESS THAN AN HOUR AFTER HE TURNED HIMSELF IN, HE AND HIS MEN KILLED 16 S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENTS."
GOD HAVE MERCY ON YOUR SOUL.

"WILLIAM STRYKER AND HIS PURIFIERS KILLED MORE STUDENTS IN A SINGLE NIGHT THAN WE'VE LOST IN ALL THE YEARS SINCE THE XAVIER INSTITUTE'S DOORS FIRST OPENED.
"BUT STRYKER AND HIS PURIFIERS HAVE ALWAYS TARGETED MUTANTS.
"XAVIER, THE X-MEN, THE STUDENTS, THE BABY...
"FOR RISMAN TO ATTACK HUMANS...TO STAGE AN ASSAULT ON A S.H.I.E.L.D. FACILITY...THIS IS AN ESCALATION IN HIS ACTIONS LIKE NOTHING WE'VE EVER SEEN.
"NOW, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE PURIFIERS HAVE SEVERAL HIGH-RANKING MEMBERS INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS WHY S.H.I.E.L.D. IGNORED THE PURIFIERS' ATTACK ON THE MANSION.
"THIS ALSO EXPLAINS WHY THEY DIDN'T ACT ON THE ATTACK AT THE HOSPITAL IN ALASKA.
070109
"BUT THIS IS SOMETHING S.H.I.E.L.D. CAN'T IGNORE, NO MATTER HOW MANY MEN THE PURIFIERS HAVE ON THE INSIDE."
SO WHY'D HE DO IT?

"RISMAN WAS AFTER SOMETHING.
THROOM!
"SOMETHING SO IMPORTANT, HE RISKED EVERYTHING TO GET IT..."
...AND IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HE USES IT AGAINST MUTANTS.

WELL, IF THOSE NUT-JOBS ARE DUMB ENOUGH TO COME AFTER US AGAIN, WE'LL TAKE 'EM DOWN. HARD.
NO. NOT THIS TIME.
I'M NOT WILLING TO WAIT UNTIL THERE ARE MORE DEAD MUTANTS ON OUR DOORSTEP.
NO, YOU'RE GOING AFTER RISMAN AND HIS PURIFIERS BEFORE THEY GET A CHANCE TO DO WHATEVER IT IS THEY HAVE PLANNED. AND WHEN YOU FIND THEM, YOU'RE GOING TO ELIMINATE THIS THREAT PERMANENTLY.
BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING IN ALONE. I WANT YOU TO PUT X-FORCE BACK TOGETHER.
DAMN, SUMMERS. I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD BE IMPRESSED, OR WORRIED YOU'VE SNAPPED.
WHAT'S FROST SAY ABOUT ALL THIS?
EMMA... DOESN'T NEED TO KNOW.
OKAY, I'M IMPRESSED.
DOESN'T MATTER, THOUGH. THERE IS NO X-FORCE, NOT ANYMORE. AFTER THE PURIFIERS KILLED CALIBAN, PROUDSTAR WENT M.I.A.
NO, HE DIDN'T. I KNOW WHERE HE IS.

OUTSIDE CAMP VERDE, ARIZONA.
BEING AN X-MAN...IT TOOK YOU FROM ME, JOHNNY. IT'S TAKEN SO MUCH, AND ALL IT'S LEFT ME IS A LEGACY I'VE FAILED TO LIVE UP TO.
I BURIED YOU HERE. I BURIED OUR ENTIRE TRIBE IN THE SHADOW OF YOUR GRAVE.
AND NOW HERE I AM AGAIN, PUTTING SOMEONE ELSE, SOMEONE I CARED ABOUT, BESIDE YOU.
YOU COULD HAVE SAVED HIM, JOHNNY...YOU COULD HAVE SAVED THEM ALL.
I NEED YOU HERE. I NEED YOU TO TEACH ME, TO GUIDE ME ON MY QUEST.
PLEASE FORGIVE ME.
SHK!
HNN!
AND IF CALIBAN IS WITH YOU, TELL HIM THAT I'M SORRY. I'M SORRY HE DIED FOR ME.
BUT I CAN GIVE HIS SPIRIT VENGEANCE.

I SWEAR THIS BLOOD OATH TO YOU...
...THE PURIFIERS WILL DIE.

WITH OR WITHOUT X-FORCE, WARPATH IS GOING AFTER THE PURIFIERS.
AND X-23 IS--
STOP.
STOP RIGHT THERE. IF JIMMY WANTS IN, THAT'S HIS DECISION. HE'S MAKING THAT CHOICE.
BUT LAURA DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO CHOOSE.
I BROUGHT HER TO XAVIER'S SO SHE COULD START A NEW LIFE, LEARN HOW TO BE A REAL PERSON. EVEN AFTER EVERYTHING THAT WENT DOWN WITH THE KIDS, I'M NOT GOING TO ASK HER TO KILL AGAIN.
FORGET IT.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO ASK HER.
I ALREADY DID.

"SHE'S INSIDE THE S.H.I.E.L.D. FACILITY RIGHT NOW."
ONE ENTRANCE, ONE EXIT, SOUTHERN WALL. S.H.I.E.L.D. ARMORY, SEVEN WEAPONS MISSING, HIGH-VELOCITY RIFLES WITH EXPLOSIVE ROUNDS.
ONE DEAD, WHITE MALE, 28-30 YEARS OLD.
...
HIGH CHOLESTEROL.
SNFF
PURIFIERS.
MATTHEW RISMAN, WHITE MALE, 34-36, PREVIOUSLY AN ASSASSIN-FOR-HIRE, ACCORDING TO O*N*E AND S.H.I.E.L.D. FILES.
HE WAS PRESENT AT THE INSTITUTE DURING THE PURIFIER ATTACK LAST YEAR AND PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS OF 42 XAVIER INSTITUTE STUDENTS KILLED IN A SINGLE ROCKET STRIKE.

RISMAN HAD AN INSIDE MAN, AGENT JEREMY LATCHAM. WHITE MALE, NO FAMILY, AGE 32. HIS FILE IS CLEAN. RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE: CHRISTIAN. CROSS-REFERENCE...
HIS MINISTRY IS ONE OF STRYKER'S.
A COMPUTER VIRUS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE SYSTEM. ALL DATA REGARDING THE STOLEN OBJECT IS GONE. SUGGEST TRACKING AGENT JEREMY LATCHAM...WAIT.
WELL DONE, BROTHER JEREMY. THE LORD AWAITS YOU WITH OPEN ARMS.
THANK YOU, FATHER.
BLAM!!
I CANNOT TRACK AGENT LATCHAM. HE PERFORMED SELF-TERMINATION TO PROTECT MISSION INTELLIGENCE...
...AND GIVEN THE CURRENT DATA, I CANNOT IDENTIFY THE STOLEN ITEM...
BUT I HAVE RISMAN'S SCENT.
I CAN TRACK HIM. WHAT IS MY MISSION?

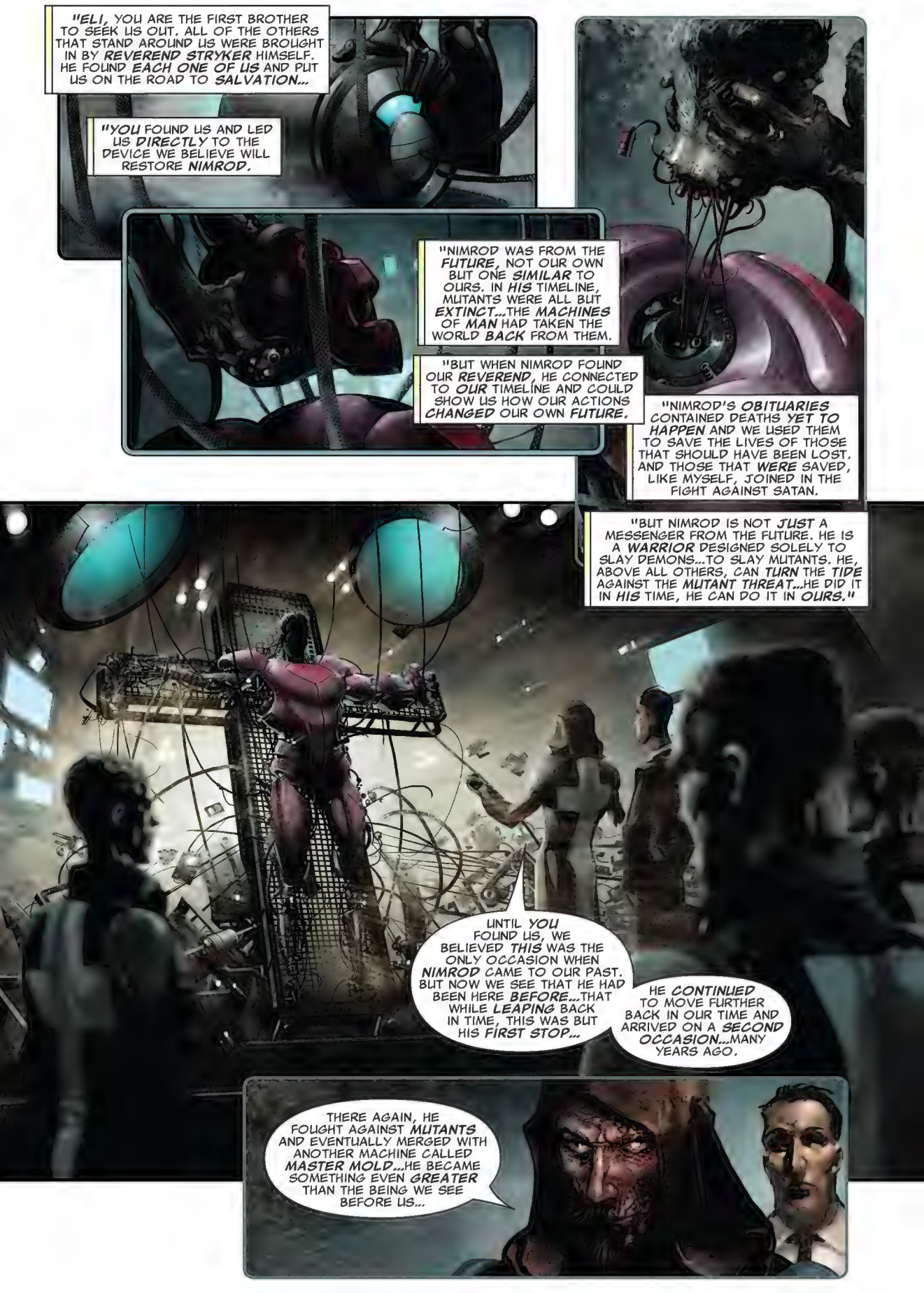
STAY WITH HIM, REPORT BACK ONCE YOU HAVE HIS LOCATION.
GOOD WORK, LAURA.
CHOK!!
UHN!!
LAURA IS MY RESPONSIBILITY. YOU SHOULD HAVE COME TO ME FIRST, SUMMERS.
IS THIS WHO YOU ARE NOW? YOU JUST USE HER LIKE THIS? YOU SET UP WARPATH TO GO DOWN LIKE HIS BROTHER? YOU PULL IN RAHNE SINCLAIR TO THIS WORLD?
IF YOU WANT RISMAN DEAD, YOU COME TO ME. BUT I'LL DO IT ALONE.
THIS TEAM IS HAPPENING, LOGAN. YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW THE LINE I'M CROSSING? I DO. THIS ISN'T X-MEN WORK.
THIS IS X-FORCE. NO ONE CAN KNOW.

I'M NOT ASKING FOR YOUR PERMISSION, LOGAN. YOU KNOW IT'S WHAT HAS TO BE DONE.
AND FOR THE RECORD... RAHNE CAME TO ME.
LOGAN...
NOT IN A MILLION YEARS, DARLIN'. TRUST ME... YOU DON'T WANT THIS.
WHATEVER PERSONAL BAGGAGE YOU'VE GOT, JUST LOSE IT. FORGET ABOUT THIS.
I CAN'T.
I HAVE TO KNOW.
GRRRR...

OUTSIDE FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA. A CHURCH OF THE REVEREND WILLIAM STRYKER.
REVEREND STRYKER WAS GIVEN A GIFT FROM THE LORD...
A HOLY MESSENGER CALLED NIMROD THAT WOULD TELL THE FAITHFUL OF THE FUTURE AND LIGHT OUR WAY TO THE PATH OF REDEMPTION.
THE REVEREND WAS SHOWN MANY VISIONS, AND THE FUTURE WAS CHANGING BEFORE HIS VERY EYES. HE WAS TURNING THE TIDE AGAINST DARKNESS...HE WAS RETURNING EDEN TO HUMANITY AND DRIVING BACK SATAN'S MUTANTS...
...AND THEN HE WAS TAKEN FROM US.
WHEN WE STRUCK OUT AGAINST THE CHILDREN OF SATAN THEY CUT OUR BELOVED FATHER DOWN, FILLING HIM WITH BLACK CANCEROUS TUMORS.
AND FOR THOSE OF US THAT SURVIVED THE BATTLE, WE RETURNED TO FIND OUR CHURCH DESTROYED, OUR BROTHERS DEAD AND THE LORD'S MESSENGER STOLEN.
WE EVENTUALLY RECLAIMED NIMROD FROM THE WRECKAGE OF A MUTANT STRONGHOLD IN TEXAS BUT WE DIDN'T FIND HIM IN TIME...
HIS CONNECTION TO THE FUTURE WAS SEVERED AND WE ARE UNABLE TO RESTORE HIS POWER...
BUT YOU, BROTHER ELI, HAVE GIVEN US NEW HOPE.

FOOTFALL, POINT TWO-SEVEN KILOMETERS SOUTH SOUTHWEST. TWO MEN.
HE'S HERE, WITH JAMES PROUDSTAR.
THE ITEM IS HERE, AS IS RISMAN. THERE ARE SEVEN GUARDS CONCEALED AROUND THE EXTERIOR OF THE BUILDING.
THE LAYOUT IS SIMILAR TO THE WASHINGTON D.C. LOCATION, WITH THE ENTRANCE TO THE SUB-LEVELS THE MOST HEAVILY GUARDED.
ALL SEVEN GUARDS WILL HAVE TO BE KILLED TO GAIN ENTRY WITHOUT TRIGGERING ALARMS. WE'LL HAVE SIX MINUTES BEFORE RADIO SILENCE WILL BE QUESTIONED.
WELL "HELLO" TO YOU, TOO.

OKAY...I DON'T KNOW WHAT BAG OF GOODS CYCLOPS SOLD YOU, BUT BOTH OF YOU NEED TO WALK AWAY FROM THIS, RIGHT NOW.
YOU DO THIS, YOU'RE NOT X-MEN ANYMORE. YOU MAY BE ON THE TEAM, YOU MAY BE STANDING NEXT TO BEAST AND ANGEL AND ICEMAN, BUT YOU WON'T BE THE SAME AS THEM.
NOT AFTER THIS.
LAURA, YOU KEEP HEADING DOWN THIS PATH, AND ANY SHOT YOU HAD AT BEING HUMAN SLIPS FURTHER AWAY.
YOU DO THIS, AND YOU'RE X-23 AGAIN.
AND YOU, JIMMY...YOU'VE GOT NO PURPOSE IN LIFE, AND YOU DECIDE TO GO BACK TO REVENGE? IT DIDN'T WORK OUT FOR YOU BEFORE AND IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK OUT FOR YOU THIS TIME.
YOU'RE A BIG TOUGH MAN, I KNOW. BUT YOU DO THIS, AND YOU'RE SOMETHING ELSE. YOU'RE JUST A KILLER.
THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE TO MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE.
WALK. AWAY.
FINE.
YOUR LIVES.


"ELI, YOU ARE THE FIRST BROTHER TO SEEK US OUT. ALL OF THE OTHERS THAT STAND AROUND US WERE BROUGHT IN BY REVEREND STRYKER HIMSELF. HE FOUND EACH ONE OF US AND PUT US ON THE ROAD TO SALVATION...
"YOU FOUND US AND LED US DIRECTLY TO THE DEVICE WE BELIEVE WILL RESTORE NIMROD.
"NIMROD WAS FROM THE FUTURE, NOT OUR OWN BUT ONE SIMILAR TO OURS. IN HIS TIMELINE, MUTANTS WERE ALL BUT EXTINCT...THE MACHINES OF MAN HAD TAKEN THE WORLD BACK FROM THEM.
"BUT WHEN NIMROD FOUND OUR REVEREND, HE CONNECTED TO OUR TIMELINE AND COULD SHOW US HOW OUR ACTIONS CHANGED OUR OWN FUTURE.
"NIMROD'S OBITUARIES CONTAINED DEATHS YET TO HAPPEN AND WE USED THEM TO SAVE THE LIVES OF THOSE THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN LOST. AND THOSE THAT WERE SAVED, LIKE MYSELF, JOINED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SATAN.
"BUT NIMROD IS NOT JUST A MESSENGER FROM THE FUTURE. HE IS A WARRIOR DESIGNED SOLELY TO SLAY DEMONS...TO SLAY MUTANTS. HE, ABOVE ALL OTHERS, CAN TURN THE TIDE AGAINST THE MUTANT THREAT...HE DID IT IN HIS TIME, HE CAN DO IT IN OURS."
UNTIL YOU FOUND US, WE BELIEVED THIS WAS THE ONLY OCCASION WHEN NIMROD CAME TO OUR PAST. BUT NOW WE SEE THAT HE HAD BEEN HERE BEFORE...THAT WHILE LEAPING BACK IN TIME, THIS WAS BUT HIS FIRST STOP...
HE CONTINUED TO MOVE FURTHER BACK IN OUR TIME AND ARRIVED ON A SECOND OCCASION...MANY YEARS AGO.
THERE AGAIN, HE FOUGHT AGAINST MUTANTS AND EVENTUALLY MERGED WITH ANOTHER MACHINE CALLED MASTER MOLD...HE BECAME SOMETHING EVEN GREATER THAN THE BEING WE SEE BEFORE US...

HE BECAME BASTION.
NOW, WITH THE PIECES OF OUR FALLEN ORACLE, WE RESTORE HIM TO NEW GREATNESS.
TODAY WE JOIN THE BODY OF NIMROD TO THE HEAD OF BASTION, AND GIVE NEW LIFE TO--
WARNING. MUTANTS DETECTED.

RRRAAA!!
AIIEEE!!
AAARRGH!!
AAAAHHH!
BUDDABUDDABUDDA!
THUNK!!
X, BEHIND YOU!!!
THOK!!

DIE, MUTANT SC--
CHUNK!
--*
HE WAS GOING TO KILL YOU. SO, I- I KILLED HIM.
YES, YOU DID.
RISMAN.
HE'S NOT ALONE. HE'S GOT--
I SMELL HER, TOO.
X-MEN!

STAND DOWN...
...OR THE MUTANT DIES.

RAHNE?!
SHE DIES, YOU FOLLOW HER ONE SECOND LATER, RISMAN.
HE'S LYING... HE DOESN'T WANT TO KILL HER.
X, DON'T--
SNIKT!
AAAIIEE!!
SHUK!
SLIK!
AAARRGHH!
I DON'T BLUFF, MUTANT.
BLAM!!

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OUTSIDE FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA. THE CHURCH OF THE REVEREND WILLIAM STRYKER. NOW.
THE PURIFIERS ATTACK US INSIDE OUR OWN BASE AND WHEN WE CATCH UP TO THEM 76 HOURS LATER, THIS IS WHAT WE FIND...
I WANT TO KNOW WHY, AND I WANT TO KNOW WHO'S RESPONSIBLE.
THE HEAT FROM THE FIRE WAS SO INTENSE IT LIQUEFIED THE MORTAR IN THE WALLS. YOU DON'T GET TEMPERATURES LIKE THIS UNDER NORMAL FIRE CONDITIONS...
WHATEVER WAS USED HERE WAS GOVERNMENT GRADE OR BETTER.
SPREAD OUT. GET ME ANSWERS.
MORALES TO HILL. IF RISMAN'S HERE, WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO POSITIVELY I.D. HIM. MOST OF THE BODIES WE'VE FOUND HAVE BEEN CREMATED BY THE FIRE.
KEEP ME INFORMED...BUT JUST ME. DIRECTOR STARK WANTS THIS KEPT DARK UNTIL WE'VE IDENTIFIED ANY OTHER PURIFIER OPERATIVES PLANTED INSIDE S.H.I.E.L.D.
MARIA HILL
UNDERSTOOD.
AGENT MORALES! WE'VE GOT MORE BODIES UNDERGROUND. A LOT MORE.
AND THEY DIDN'T DIE FROM THE FIRE.

ELEVEN HOURS AGO.
RAHNE!!
AFTER ALL THE MUTANTS I'VE TAKEN FROM YOUR INSTITUTE, DID YOU REALLY THINK I WOULDN'T KILL ONE MORE?
THIS IS MATTHEW RISMAN.
HE'S A DEAD MAN.

CYCLOPS ORDERED X-FORCE TO TAKE DOWN THE PURIFIERS, AND RAHNE WANTED IN. I SAID NO.
GNNN... NN...
SO SHE CAME BY HERSELF, AHEAD OF US, AND GOT CAPTURED.
NOW SHE'S GOT A BULLET IN HER KNEE. BEST-CASE SCENARIO IS SHE GETS OUT OF THIS WITH A LIMP.
WORST-CASE IS SHE DOESN'T GET OUT.
THEY DRUGGED HER.
HEROIN.
FORTUNATELY FOR YOUR FRIEND, I AM A MAN OF GOD AND DECIDED TO SHOW HER MERCY NOT DESERVING OF YOUR KIND...
BUT I AM ONLY HUMAN, AND HAVE MY LIMITS.
SO, SURRENDER NOW...
OR SHE BEGINS HER ETERNAL SUFFERING IN HELL TONIGHT.

DO WHAT HE SAYS, X.
HE'S LYING.
WE'RE NOT RISKING RAHNE'S LIFE ON A HUNCH... NOW, STAND DOWN.
YOU'RE DEAD, DO YOU HEAR ME, RISMAN? ALL OF YOU ARE--
WHUMP
UHH!!
ON YOUR KNEES, DEMON!
YOU HAVE THE EYES OF A KILLER, GIRL...NOT LIKE WOLVERINE. NO, HE'S JUST AN ANIMAL. BUT YOU...YOU WERE BRED FOR MURDER.
AND RIGHT NOW YOU'RE THINKING OF ELEVEN DIFFERENT WAYS TO KILL ME, AREN'T YOU?
NO... TWENTY-SEVEN.
HEH. I BELIEVE YOU.
HE WILL NOT KILL HER.
STAND THE $%@# DOWN, X!
NOW!!
THIS IS A MISTAKE.
SLAT!
SLAT!
BIND THEM ALL.

CRAP LIKE THIS IS WHY I'M NO LEADER.
THUD!
HNN!
ANY OTHER TIME, THIS GUY WOULD HAVE LOST HIS HAND FOR THAT.
ANY OTHER TIME, I'D HAVE GIVEN IN TO THE BEAST INSIDE ME AND RISMAN'S INTESTINES WOULD BE DECORATING THIS PLACE.
BUT NOW I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR--
FATHER MATTHEW? THE GIRL...
...SHE'S HOLDING SOMETHING.
SHE'S GOT A--
X DON'T!!!
CLICK
AW, $#%@.

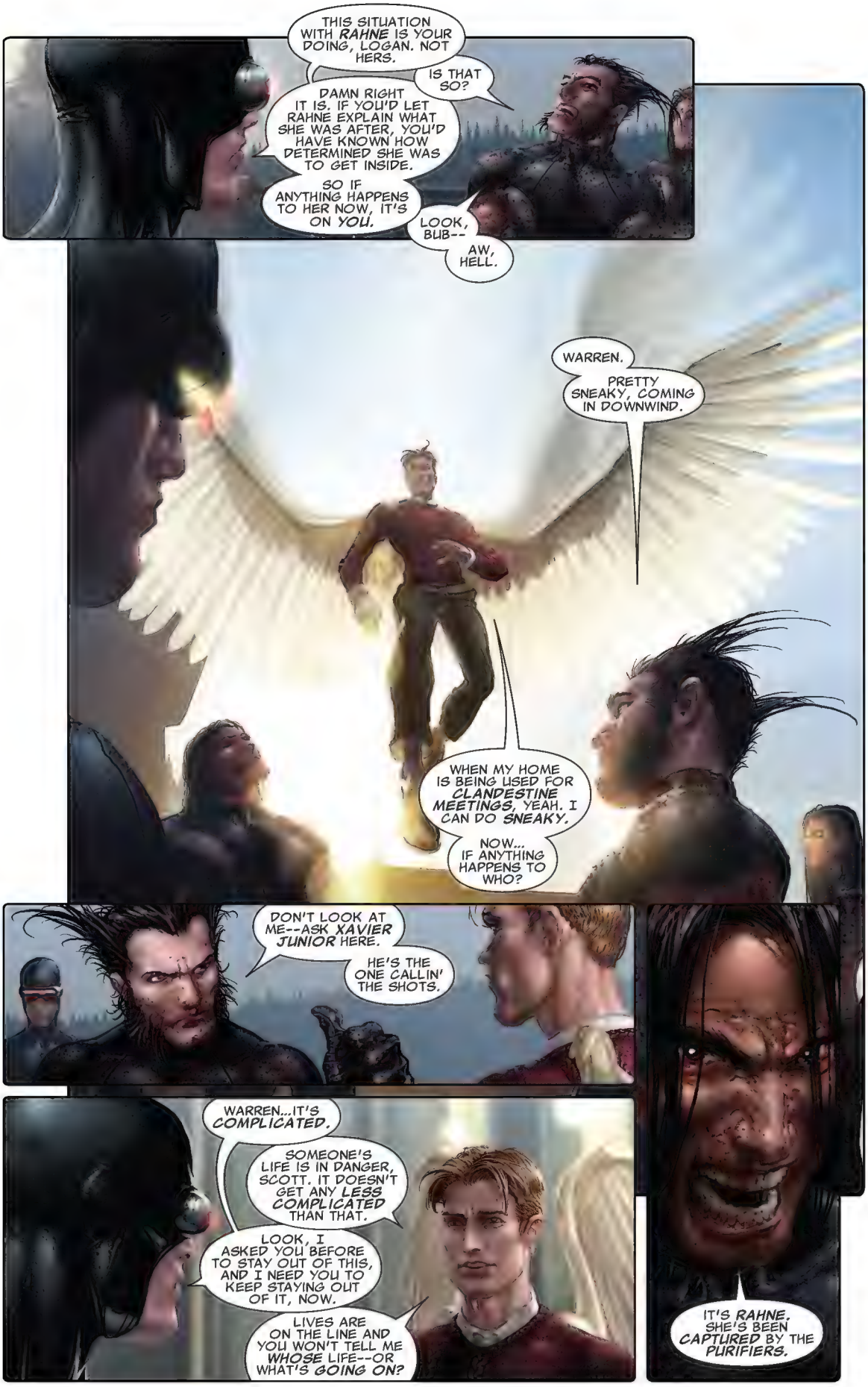
FINAL

SHOOT
AAAAHHH--
THIS IS GONNA HURT.
HURK!
OH, SH--
MISSION CONTINGENCY ACTIVATED.
TARGET RISMAN IS ALIVE AND ON THE MOVE.
PURSUING.

HK! HURK!!
HURTS A HELL OF A LOT MORE COMING OUT.
LAURA'S AFTER RISMAN. I HAVE TO GET TO JIMMY.
WARPATH!! YOU BETTER BE ALIVE, DAMMIT!!
WHERE'S RAHNE?
RISMAN MADE OFF WITH HER. YOU OKAY?
YEAH, PURIFIERS TOOK THE BRUNT.
WELL, AT LEAST THEY'RE GOOD FOR SOMETHING.
COME ON, WE NEED TO GET TO LAURA BEFORE SHE GETS RAHNE KILLED.

THE GIRL IS FOLLOWING ME.
KILL HER.
MULTIPLE TARGETS.
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
TARGETS ELIMINATED. STAY ON RISMAN.
TAKE OFF! NOW!!
SIR, GET DOWN!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
GUH!!
WEAPON IS OUT OF AMMUNITION. TARGET IS ESCAPING...
COLLECTING VISUAL DATA. TWO KNOWN OCCUPANTS. TWO UNKNOWN.
CANNOT MAKE VISUAL ON THE LAST OCCUPANT.
CLICK CLICK CLICK
RAHNE! RAHNE!!
I FAILED.
I'M GONNA KILL SUMMERS.

ANGEL'S AERIE, THE COLORADO ROCKY MOUNTAINS. NOW.
WHAT THE @#$% WAS THAT?!
DID YOU FORGET TO MENTION THAT YOU WIRED THE WHOLE DAMN PLACE TO BLOW?
YOU AND I, WE CAN BE BURNED, BLOWN UP, AND TAKE A THOUSAND ROUNDS IN THE CHEST--BUT WARPATH AND WOLFSBANE CAN'T!
THEY SURVIVED.
WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH YOU, LAURA?! RISMAN'S STILL GOT RAHNE AND HE'S GOING TO KILL HER!
SAVING WOLFSBANE WAS NOT MY MISSION.
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?!
SHE MEANS EXACTLY WHAT SHE SAID. HER MISSION WAS TO ELIMINATE MATTHEW RISMAN, NOT PERFORM A SEARCH AND RESCUE.


THIS SITUATION WITH RAHNE IS YOUR DOING, LOGAN. NOT HERS.
IS THAT SO?
DAMN RIGHT IT IS. IF YOU'D LET RAHNE EXPLAIN WHAT SHE WAS AFTER, YOU'D HAVE KNOWN HOW DETERMINED SHE WAS TO GET INSIDE.
SO IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO HER NOW, IT'S ON YOU.
LOOK, BUB--
AW, HELL.
WARREN.
PRETTY SNEAKY, COMING IN DOWNWIND.
WHEN MY HOME IS BEING USED FOR CLANDESTINE MEETINGS, YEAH. I CAN DO SNEAKY.
NOW... IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO WHO?
DON'T LOOK AT ME--ASK XAVIER JUNIOR HERE.
HE'S THE ONE CALLIN' THE SHOTS.
WARREN...IT'S COMPLICATED.
SOMEONE'S LIFE IS IN DANGER, SCOTT. IT DOESN'T GET ANY LESS COMPLICATED THAN THAT.
LOOK, I ASKED YOU BEFORE TO STAY OUT OF THIS, AND I NEED YOU TO KEEP STAYING OUT OF IT, NOW.
LIVES ARE ON THE LINE AND YOU WON'T TELL ME WHOSE LIFE--OR WHAT'S GOING ON?
IT'S RAHNE. SHE'S BEEN CAPTURED BY THE PURIFIERS.

DAMMIT, WARPATH...
WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?
WE HAVE TO TELL THE OTHERS! WE HAVE TO FIND HER!
NO WE DON'T.
LOOK, WE KNOW THE PURIFIERS ONLY CARE ABOUT KILLING MUTANTS... CHILDREN, BABIES, EVEN FORMER MUTANTS...
BUT THEY'VE CAPTURED WOLFSBANE AND KEPT HER ALIVE TO THIS POINT, SO RIGHT NOW WE'RE DEALING WITH SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY.
FOR WHATEVER REASON, RAHNE'S SAFE FOR NOW AND WE'LL GET HER BACK.
BUT IF WE GET THE X-MEN INVOLVED, WE'RE PUTTING HER AT EVEN MORE RISK AND GUARANTEEING SOMEONE ON OUR SIDE WILL GET KILLED.
WHY WOULD SHE DO THIS? WHY GO AFTER THEM BY HERSELF?
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT REVEREND CRAIG?
HE'S THE SADISTIC BASTARD WHO RAISED RAHNE. HE BEAT RELIGION INTO HER AND FORCED HER TO BELIEVE SHE WAS EVIL BECAUSE SHE WAS BORN A MUTANT.
THAT'S RIGHT. AND WOLFSBANE JUST FOUND OUT THAT HE'S JOINED THE PURIFIERS.
SHE WANTED REVENGE.
NO! YOU DON'T KNOW RAHNE, SHE'D NEVER WANT THAT.

"WHEN RAHNE AND I FIRST MET, SHE KNEW ALL ABOUT MY BROTHER AND WE USED TO SWAP STORIES...
"I TOLD HER ABOUT JOHNNY AND SHE USED TO TALK ABOUT CRAIG..."
HNNN...
"RAHNE TOLD ME THAT REVEREND CRAIG BELIEVED THAT SHE WAS A TEST FROM GOD."
WHAT... WHERE AM I?
"THAT SHE WAS A LIVING SIN, SENT TO HIM FOR CLEANSING."
WHAT IS--
"BUT SHE HAD TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT HIM ON HER OWN."
ARE YE AWAKE NOW, SINNER?
"CRAIG WASN'T JUST THE MAN WHO RAISED HER...
"HE WAS ALSO HER..."
F-FATHER?

NO. YE ARE NOT MY FLESH AND BLOOD.
SATAN'S DAUGHTER YE ARE, DEMON. AND YE WILL ADDRESS ME AS "REVEREND."
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THE PURIFIERS?
FROM THE SECOND I RECOGNIZED YE FOR WHAT YE WERE, I KNEW THAT SATAN'S SPAWN WALKED GOD'S EARTH.
BUT I THOUGHT I WAS ALONE IN FIGHTING YE.
BUT NO MORE.
NO...STOP! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
NOW I'VE LEARNED WHY I WAS MADE TO SUFFER YOUR EXISTENCE.
NO... UHHH... WHAT DID YOU...
I AM TO BE YOUR INQUISITOR.
I WILL LISTEN TO YOUR SINS, AND YE WILL MAKE AMENDS TO THE LORD FOR POISONING EDEN WITH YOUR WICKEDNESS.
"YOU SEEM CONCERNED, MATTHEW. IS IT THE REVEREND CRAIG? HE DOES SEEMS A BIT...UNSTABLE."
"YOU'RE VERY PERCEPTIVE, BROTHER ELI. BUT NO, IT'S NOT CRAIG. HE'LL DO WHAT WE REQUIRE OF HIM.
"IT'S BASTION."

HE WON'T MEET WITH ME, HE WON'T EVEN SPEAK TO ME. HE'S EFFECTIVELY TAKEN OVER THE PURIFIERS, AND ISN'T INFORMING ME OF HIS PLANS.
MATTHEW RISMAN...
...WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING?
BASTION...REVEREND STRYKER LEFT SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR RAHNE SINCLAIR. SHE WAS CHOSEN TO--
KILL THE MUTANT.
WHAT? I-I CAN'T...PLEASE LET ME EXPLAIN-- THERE IS A PLAN--
NO. WE HAVE ANALYZED YOUR "PLAN."
IT HAS A 99.74 PERCENT PROBABILITY OF FAILURE.
ITS FAILURE HAS ALREADY BEGUN...

OMAHA, NEBRASKA.
"THE X-MEN HAVE SENT THEIR TRACKERS AND KILLERS AFTER YOU, MATHEW RISMAN.
"WOLVERINE, WARPATH. X-23.
"EVEN AS WE SPEAK, THEY ARE RAIDING PURIFIER BASES.
WICHITA, KANSAS.
TULSA, OKLAHOMA.
"THEY WILL TORTURE AND KILL EVERY PURIFIER THEY FIND, ALL TO RECOVER THEIR TEAMMATE.
"AND EVENTUALLY, MATTHEW RISMAN... THEY WILL KILL YOU."

HE'S NOT GOING TO REALLY DO IT, IS HE?
YES, HE IS.
THIS IS GONNA HURT A LITTLE.
NOT... AFRAID OF YOU... MUTANT...
I WASN'T TALKING ABOUT YOU, BUB. YOU'RE NOT GOING TO FEEL A THING.
NNN! THE CLAW... IT GETS SO HOT THAT WHEN I SLICE OFF YOUR EAR, YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM WILL JUST... SHUT DOWN.
YOUR HANDS, YOUR NOSE, AN EYE... THE WOUNDS WILL CAUTERIZE, AND I'LL KEEP YOU ALIVE UNTIL YOU GIVE ME WHAT I NEED...
'COURSE, GETTING A DATE AFTER THIS IS GOING TO BE A LITTLE ROUGH.
PAF!
I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET RAHNE BACK... BUT YOU AND LOGAN... HOW CAN YOU BOTH BE SO INDIFFERENT TO ALL THIS BLOOD?
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOUR QUESTION.
NEVER MIND.
I GOT A LOCATION.

REVEREND STRYKER ENTRUSTED ME WITH TWO THINGS, SHOULD HE EVER BE KILLED...TO PROTECT THE ORACLE AND TO CREATE THE CHOIR.
AND THAT'S WHAT I INTEND TO DO.
WILLIAM STRYKER WAS A FLAWED MAN.
THAT "FLAWED MAN" ENGINEERED YOUR RESURRECTION. HOW CAN YOU--
ARE YOU DEFECTIVE, MATTHEW RISMAN?
WHAT?
WE KNOW HOW TO ELIMINATE THE MUTANTS...BUT YOU DO NOT LISTEN TO US.
YET YOUR MISSION IS TO ELIMINATE THE MUTANTS. WHY WILL YOU NOT OBEY YOUR OWN MISSION?
ARE, YOU, DEFECTIVE?
MATTHEW...
NO. NO, I'M NOT DEFECTIVE.
I'LL LISTEN.

WE CONCLUDED, AS DID THE FLAWED WILLIAM STRYKER, THAT THE X-MEN ARE THE GREATEST MUTANT THREAT IN THIS TIMELINE, OR ANY OTHER.
"WE HAVE ALSO CONCLUDED THAT NO EXISTING TERRESTRIAL FORCE CAN GUARANTEE THE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF THE X-MEN."
"SO THERE'S NO WAY TO STOP THEM?"
"INCORRECT. WE SAID THERE WAS NO TERRESTRIAL SOLUTION, MATTHEW RISMAN."
"THEN WHERE?"
WE'RE NEARING THE COORDINATES. SLOW DOWN.

BEFORE OUR RESTORATION, I BECAME AWARE OF A CREATURE WITH THE ABILITY TO INFECT AND ABSORB ORGANIC MATTER, CONVERTING IT INTO SUSTENANCE OR INFUSING IT WITH ITS OWN SENTIENCE.
THE CREATURE WAS REVERTED TO A NASCENT FORM, AND LEFT ON THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN.
LEFT THERE BY THE X-MEN.
DEAR GOD...WHAT IS THIS?
"IT STAYED THERE FOR A VERY LONG TIME. GROWING. EVOLVING. REPLICATING."
"AND HOW WILL WE FIND IT?"
"IT WILL FIND US, MATTHEW RISMAN."
CHOOOM!
AHHHH!
"AND IF THIS 'CREATURE' IS SO DEADLY, WON'T IT JUST KILL WHOEVER COMES AFTER IT?"
TRANSMIT THE SIGNAL!!
"I'VE GIVEN YOUR PURIFIERS A BEACON IT WILL RESPOND TO. A SINGLE WORD.
"WARLOCK."
"DOES YOUR CREATURE HAVE A NAME?"
"OH, YES."

MAGUS.

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X FORCE
KYLE YOST CRAIN
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PRAGUE.
BAMBAMBAM!!
OPEN THE DOOR, MISTER PIERCE.
WHOEVER THESE PEOPLE ARE, THEY'VE CHASED ME ACROSS TWO CONTINENTS.
FINISH THIS. NOW!!
...ALMOST DONE...GOING AS FAST AS I--
MISTER PIERCE...
DIE!
AAAHH!
CHOOM! CHOOM! CHOOM!
YOU KNEW MY NAME, IDIOT, SO YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN NOT TO--
DONALD PIERCE...
...YOUR PRESENCE HAS BEEN REQUESTED.

‹...AND THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF DEATH, I SHALL FEAR NO EVIL...›
‹I THINK SHE FEARED EVIL WHEN SHE BUTCHERED THAT LITTLE GIRL?›
‹YOU MEAN, "GIRLS." WORD JUST CAME IN, THE SISTER ISN'T GOING TO MAKE IT...›
‹THE PRISONER HAS BEEN FOUND GUILTY OF THE PREMEDITATED MURDER OF A MINOR.›
‹PER THE LAWS OF THIS COUNTRY, SHE HAS BEEN SENTENCED TO DEATH. DOES THE ACCUSED HAVE ANY LAST WORDS?›
I REGRET THAT I WILL NOT SEE THE OTHER MUTANT DIE.
KHOOOM!
BUDDABU
NOOO NOO--
BUDDABUD
AIEEEE!!
DDABUDDABURRA
CHOK'A
LEPER QUEEN. YOU HAVE BEEN SUMMONED.
BY WHO?
THE LORD.

MOUNT EVEREST.
THAT'S QUITE A DROP.
ANY READINGS?
YES, SISTER MARY. HE'S HERE.
THE ORACLE WILL BE PLEASED.
IT'S TIME TO COME HOME, MR. HODGE.

WASHINGTON, D.C.
CHOK!
WE'VE FOUND HIM.
WHAT'S LEFT OF HIM, ANYWAY.
MOVE HIM INTO THE VAN, QUICKLY.
CREED
"DID I EVER TELL YOU HOW I MET THE REVEREND STRYKER?"

I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF A JOB WHEN HE FIRST CONTACTED ME.
HE SAID THE LORD HAD SENT HIM WITH AN URGENT MESSAGE AND THAT LIVES WOULD BE LOST IF I DID NOT HEED HIS WARNING.
AT FIRST I THOUGHT HE WAS CRAZY BUT IN THE END I LISTENED TO HIM...
...AND HE SAVED THE LIVES OF MY WIFE AND DAUGHTER.
SO YOU SEE, ELI, I OWE WILLIAM STRYKER EVERYTHING.
ONLY HE COULD HAVE SAVED MY FAMILY AND NOW ONLY I CAN INSURE HIS CRUSADE IS COMPLETED.
HIS PLANS AGAINST THE X-MEN ARE ALREADY IN MOTION AND I WILL NOT ALLOW THEM TO BE STOPPED.
BUT BASTION GAVE YOU SPECIFIC ORDERS...
AND THE ORACLE'S ORDERS WILL BE CARRIED OUT--BUT NOT AT THE COST OF WILLIAM STRYKER'S MISSION.
NOW TELL ME, REVEREND CRAIG. HOW DID IT FEEL TO DELIVER WOLFSBANE TO THE LORD?
RIGHTEOUS.

EAST OF MISSOULA, MONTANA.
MY NAME IS JAMES PROUDSTAR. I AM APACHE.
THESE ARE BLACKFOOT LANDS...
AND THESE LANDS ARE ABOUT TO GET A $#!^LOAD OF BLOOD SPILLED ON THEM.
LET'S DO THIS.
PURIFIER BLOOD.

THESE BASTARDS HAVE KILLED CHILDREN...THEY'VE KILLED *BABIES*, JUST BECAUSE THEY WERE MUTANTS.
AND THEY KILLED MY FRIEND CALIBAN...
I PROMISED HIM I'D MAKE THEM PAY.
BUT THE PURIFIERS HAVE MADE IT WORSE FOR THEMSELVES...
BECAUSE NOW THEY'VE TAKEN RAHNE, TOO.

WOLVERINE AND X-23 HAVE KILLED AND TORTURED THEIR WAY ACROSS THE MIDWEST, LOOKING FOR HER.
AND I'VE DONE THINGS IN THE LAST FEW DAYS I DIDN'T KNOW I WAS CAPABLE OF.
WHEN CYCLOPS CALLED US X-FORCE, I HELD MY TONGUE FOR ONCE.
X-FORCE WAS A TEAM OF KIDS TURNED INTO SOLDIERS...
BUT THIS, THE THREE OF US...
THIS IS SOMETHING DIFFERENT.
AND RIGHT THIS SECOND, I'M OKAY WITH THAT.

BECAUSE WHEN I FIND THE PURIFIERS...
WHEN I FIND THAT SON OF A BITCH WHO TOOK RAHNE, WHO PUT A BULLET IN HER...
IT WON'T BE WOLVERINE OR X-23 WHO TAKES HIM DOWN.
IT'LL BE ME.
AND I'M GOING TO KILL MATTHEW RISMAN WITH MY BARE--

RAHNE!!

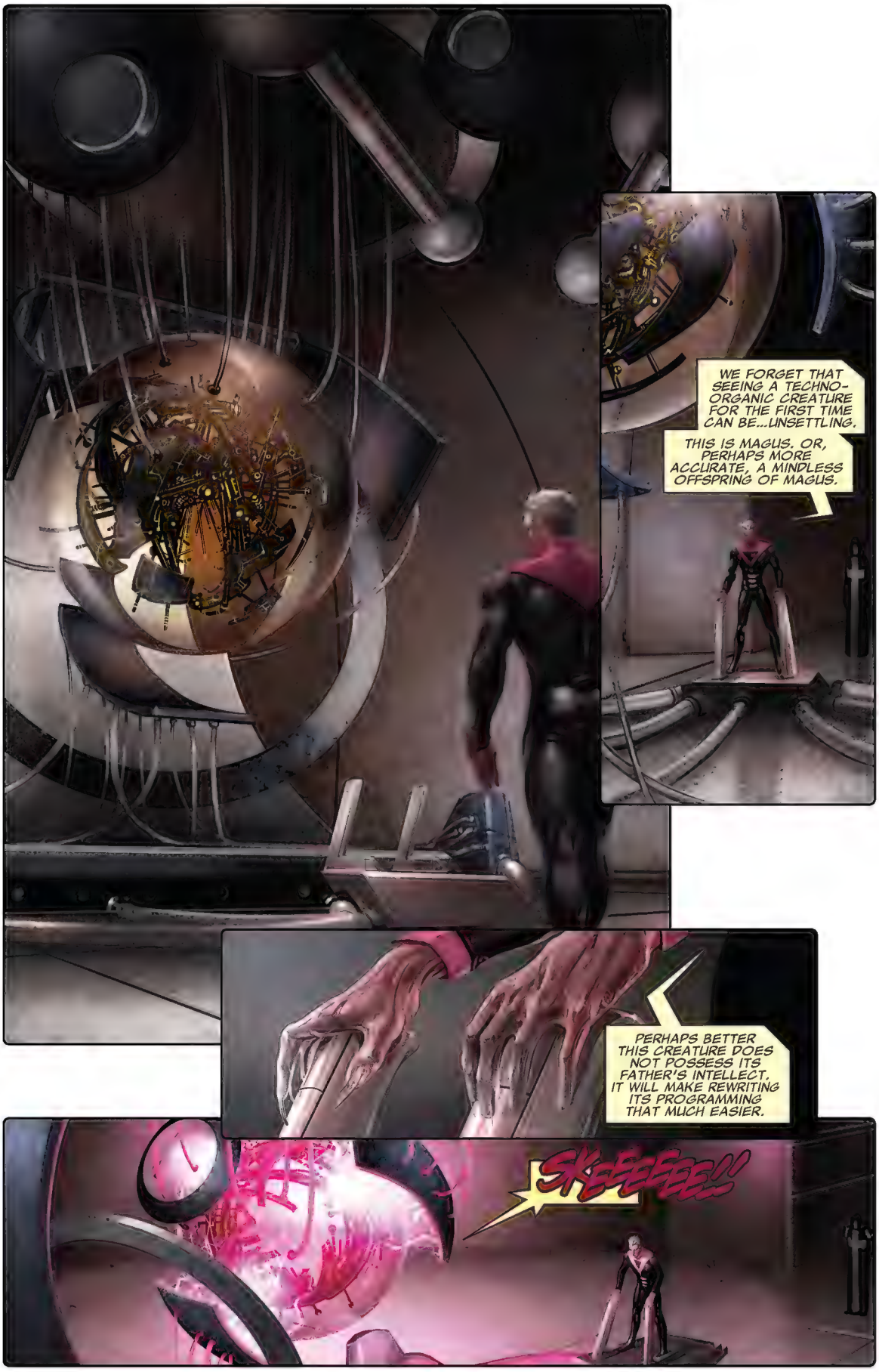
CHICAGO.
NEGATIVE MUTANT PRESENCE.
THE GIRL ISN'T ON BOARD.
NO, ORACLE. ONLY THE THREE.
FATHER...
BASTION.
I TRUST THIS PURIFIER BASE HAS MET YOUR NEEDS.
IS THE MUTANT DEAD?

MONTANA.
RAHNE!!
NO, PLEASE GOD, NOT AGAIN...
THOSE WERE YOUR ORDERS.
DID. YOU. KILL HER?!
RAHNE?
YES.
HNNN...
SHE'S STILL ALIVE! WE HAVE TO GET HER HELP! MOVE!

WHERE ARE YOU TAKING US?
INCORRECT. THE QUESTION IS, WHERE ARE WE TAKING YOU? THE OUTSIDER IS NOT COMING WITH US.
EXCUSE ME?
"ELI BARD"...
REAL NAME: UNKNOWN...
FORMER ALIASES: UNKNOWN...
IDENTITY: UNKNOWN...
OCCUPATION: UNKNOWN...
LEGAL STATUS: UNKNOWN...
PLACE OF BIRTH: UNKNOWN...
MARITAL STATUS: UNKNOWN...
BASE OF OPERATIONS: UNKNOWN...
GROUP AFFILIATION: UNKNOWN...
FIRST APPEARANCE: UNKNOWN...
YOU CALL YOURSELF "ELI BARD" BUT WE HAVE NO RECORD OF YOU, PRESENT OR FUTURE.
WE DO NOT KNOW YOU, AND WE DO NOT TRUST YOU.

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, BASTION, BUT IF NOT FOR BROTHER ELI, YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE.
HE'S THE ONE THAT LED US TO YOU.
HURK!!
IRRELEVANT.
MATTHEW...
YOU SAID YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HIM, SO WHY KILL HIM NOW?
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, ELI...I'LL GET YOU OUT OF THIS.
LET ME FIND OUT WHO HE IS, AND IF HE'S AGAINST US...I'LL BE THE ONE TO KILL HIM.
ACCEPTABLE.
I PROMISE.

WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME...
THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HEAVEN, MATTHEW RISMAN.
THIS IS THE WORK OF MAN.
YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOU'RE DEALING WITH! I HAVE FRIENDS IN POWERFUL PLACES, DO YOU HEAR ME?!
WE KNOW ALL ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS, DONALD PIERCE. WHY DO YOU THINK YOU ARE HERE?
BASTION!!
IS THIS THE APOCALYPSE AGAIN?
WILL IT HURT?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE? BASTION, WHAT ARE YOU--
DEAR GOD.


WE FORGET THAT SEEING A TECHNO-ORGANIC CREATURE FOR THE FIRST TIME CAN BE...UNSETTLING.
THIS IS MAGUS. OR, PERHAPS MORE ACCURATE, A MINDLESS OFFSPRING OF MAGUS.
PERHAPS BETTER THIS CREATURE DOES NOT POSSESS ITS FATHER'S INTELLECT. IT WILL MAKE REWRITING ITS PROGRAMMING THAT MUCH EASIER.
SKEEEEEE!!

NOW WE/ SELF AM/ARE IN CONTROL.
NOW SELF/ WE ARE/ AM TECHNARCHY/ NOT TECHNARCHY.
CHOK!
CHOK!
YEARRRGHH!!
AAAIIEEEEEE!!!

COLORADO.
ANGEL'S AERIE.
WHAT THE--?
WARPATH!?
!!BOOM!
JAMES! WHAT HAPPENED? IS SHE OKAY?
DOES SHE LOOK OKAY, WORTHINGTON?!
SHE'S SEIZING!
HK! HKK!!

COME ON, RAHNEY, YOU CAN DO THIS... JUST HOLD ON...
NNN!!
WHAT HAPPENED?
THE PURIFIERS INJECTED HER WITH AN OVERDOSE OF HEROIN...
BUT THEY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN IT WASN'T A LETHAL AMOUNT.
LET ME HELP, LOGAN.
YOU WANNA HELP?
THEN GO FIND ELIXIR RIGHT FREAKING NOW!

BASTION... WHAT YOU'VE DONE...
WE EXPLAINED THAT THERE WAS NO EXISTING TERRESTRIAL FORCE THAT COULD GUARANTEE THE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF THE X-MEN...
YES...BUT WHAT YOU'VE DONE...IT'S UNHOLY. WE NEVER SHOULD HAVE--
WE HAVE CREATED A TERRESTRIAL SOLUTION TO THE X-MEN AND THE GLOBAL MUTANT THREAT.
THE FIRST STAGE IS COMPLETE.
FROM HERE, WE EXPAND.
TAKE YOUR PLACE, MATTHEW RISMAN.
THIS IS THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY.

CONTINUED IN X-FORCE #4 ON SALE NOW!

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DIVIDED WE STAND

X-FORCE

KYLE YOST CRAIN

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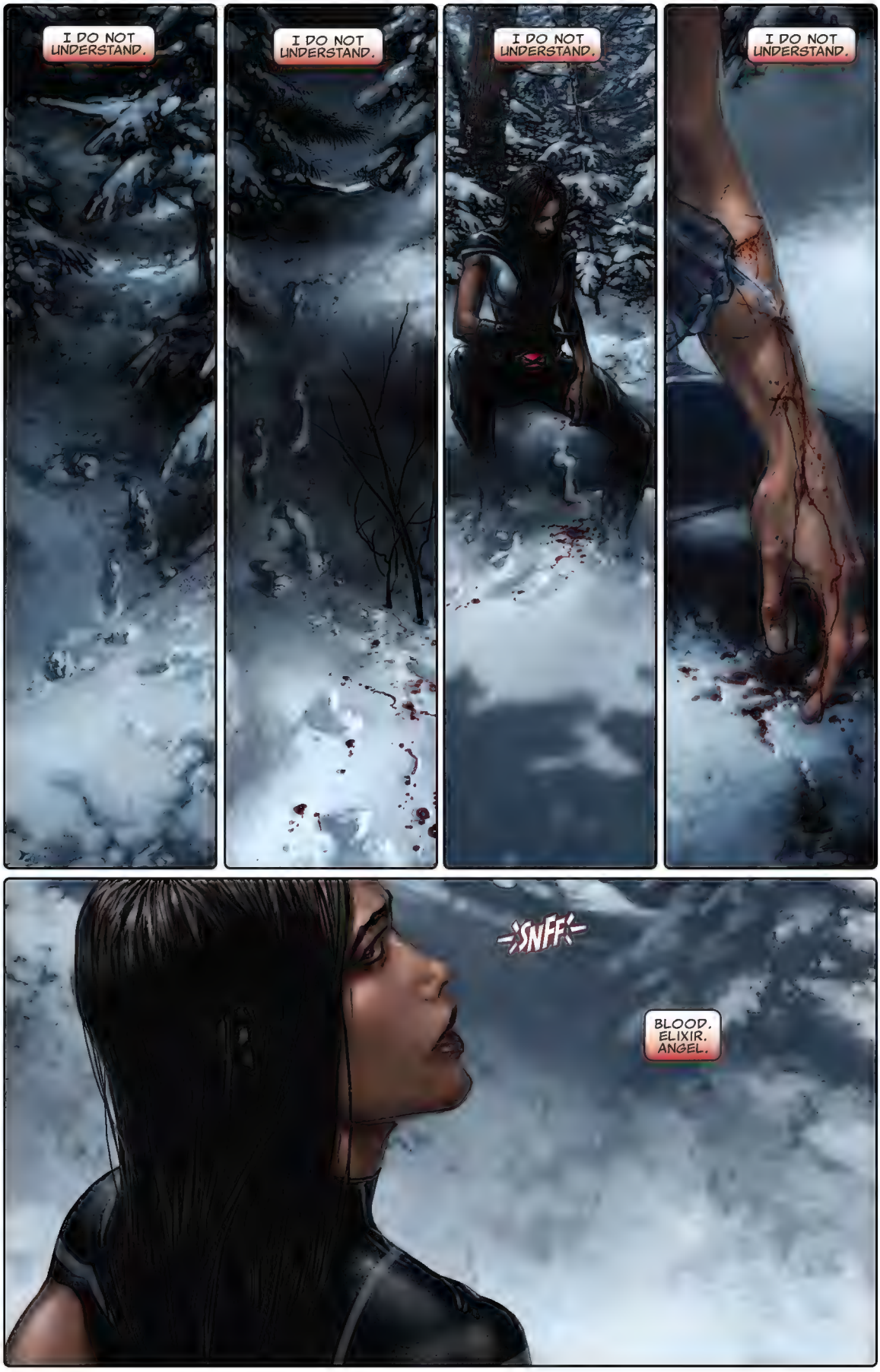
MY DESIGNATION IS "X-23."
I WAS THE 23RD EMBRYO CREATED BY THE FACILITY IN A PROJECT DESIGNED TO CLONE THE MUTANT CALLED WEAPON X.
HRRNNNN!!!
THE FACILITY CONDITIONED ME FROM BIRTH TO BE THE PERFECT LIVING WEAPON AND TRAINED ME IN THE SKILLS NEEDED TO TRACK AND KILL ANY TARGET, ANYWHERE.
MY GOD...
GIVE ME GOOD NEWS, GOLDEN BOY.
AT THIRTEEN, I KILLED MY CREATORS...INCLUDING MY MOTHER, DR. SARAH KINNEY.
NOW I TAKE ORDERS FROM CYCLOPS.
HER LEG IS HEALED...
MY FIRST MISSION WAS TO FIND AND KILL THE PURIFIER MATTHEW RISMAN, BUT BEFORE I COULD COMPLETE MY ASSIGNMENT, RAHNE SINCLAIR WAS CAPTURED.
SHE WAS HELD FOR DAYS, BUT THEN RELEASED AFTER RECEIVING A NEAR-LETHAL DOSE OF HEROIN.
...AND I'M PURGING THE DRUGS FROM HER SYSTEM NOW.
HER SURVIVAL IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE PURIFIERS' PREVIOUS ACTIONS. I DO NOT BELIEVE THEY INTENDED TO KILL HER WITH THE OVERDOSE.
I TRIED TO SEPARATE THE HEROIN FROM HER BLOOD CELLS AND EVEN THOUGH I COULDN'T GET ALL OF IT...
SHE'LL BE OKAY... PHYSICALLY.
IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PURIFIERS' OBJECTIVES HAVE CHANGED, BUT THE EMOTIONAL CONNECTION THE OTHERS SHARE WITH SINCLAIR PREVENTS THEM FROM LISTENING TO ME.
NOW OUR MISSION IS AT RISK.
I'LL GO TELL LOGAN.
NO... I'LL DO IT.

COLORADO.
I HAVE STUDIED WEAPON X ALL OF MY LIFE, BUT HE IS NOT LIKE THE FERAL MUTANT I WAS TRAINED TO KILL...
HE IS VERY EMOTIONAL FOR A WEAPON.
RAHNE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST KIDS THAT CHUCK BROUGHT INTO THE SCHOOL AFTER I GOT THERE.
CHUCK...PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER. STATUS, UNKNOWN.
SHE WAS ONE OF THE NEW MUTANTS... AND I HELPED TRAIN HER.
THEN SHE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER.
HHN.
SHUT UP AND LISTEN!
HIS ENTIRE SCENT CHANGES IN AN INSTANT. I HAVE ANGERED HIM.

RAHNE SINCLAIR HAS TWO THINGS WE'LL NEVER GET BACK...HOPE AND INNOCENCE.
SHE'S WHO WE SAVE--SHE'S WHY WE RISK OUR LIVES.
SHE'S WHO WE DIE FOR!
LOGAN!
SINCLAIR IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOU OR ME. OUR LIVES ARE WORTH NOTHING COMPARED TO HERS!
HAVE YOU GONE NUTS, OLD MAN?!
RAHNE'S GOING TO BE FINE.
YOU HEAR ME, X?!
LOGAN! LET'S TAKE A WALK AND COOL OFF.
FINE. I NEED A BEER.

RAHNE... RAHNE...
UHN...
HI. REMEMBER ME?
HEY RAHNÉ...
...HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
RRRR...
RRRR!!
AAHHH!
RRRRAAAA!!!
NO! RAHNE, WHAT ARE YOU--


I DO NOT UNDERSTAND.
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND.
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND.
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND.
SNFF
BLOOD. ELIXIR. ANGEL.

I DO NOT HAVE CURRENT DATA ON WARPATH'S ENHANCED SENSES, AND WOLVERINE IS OUT OF HIS SENSORY RANGE.
I AM ALL THAT IS LEFT.
UNDER THE SOUNDS OF THE ATTACK, I HEAR JOSH FOLEY'S LABORED BREATHING, WHICH MEANS HE ISN'T HER TARGET...
ANGEL IS.
I HEAR THE TEARING OF MUSCLE AS IT IS SEPARATED FROM BROKEN, HOLLOW BONE AND FLESH...
HER ATTACK ON ANGEL IS NOT EMOTIONAL...IT'S STRATEGIC.
THE LACERATIONS SOUND ALMOST...

...SURGICAL.
RRRRR...

HER SCENT, HER POSTURE, EVERYTHING ABOUT HER...SHE IS NOT GOING TO STOP.
SHIKT!
SHIKT!
SHE WILL HAVE TO BE--
SINCLAIR IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOU OR ME...
"OUR LIVES ARE WORTH NOTHING COMPARED TO HERS!"
SLIKT
SLIKT
RyAAA!!
HK!!

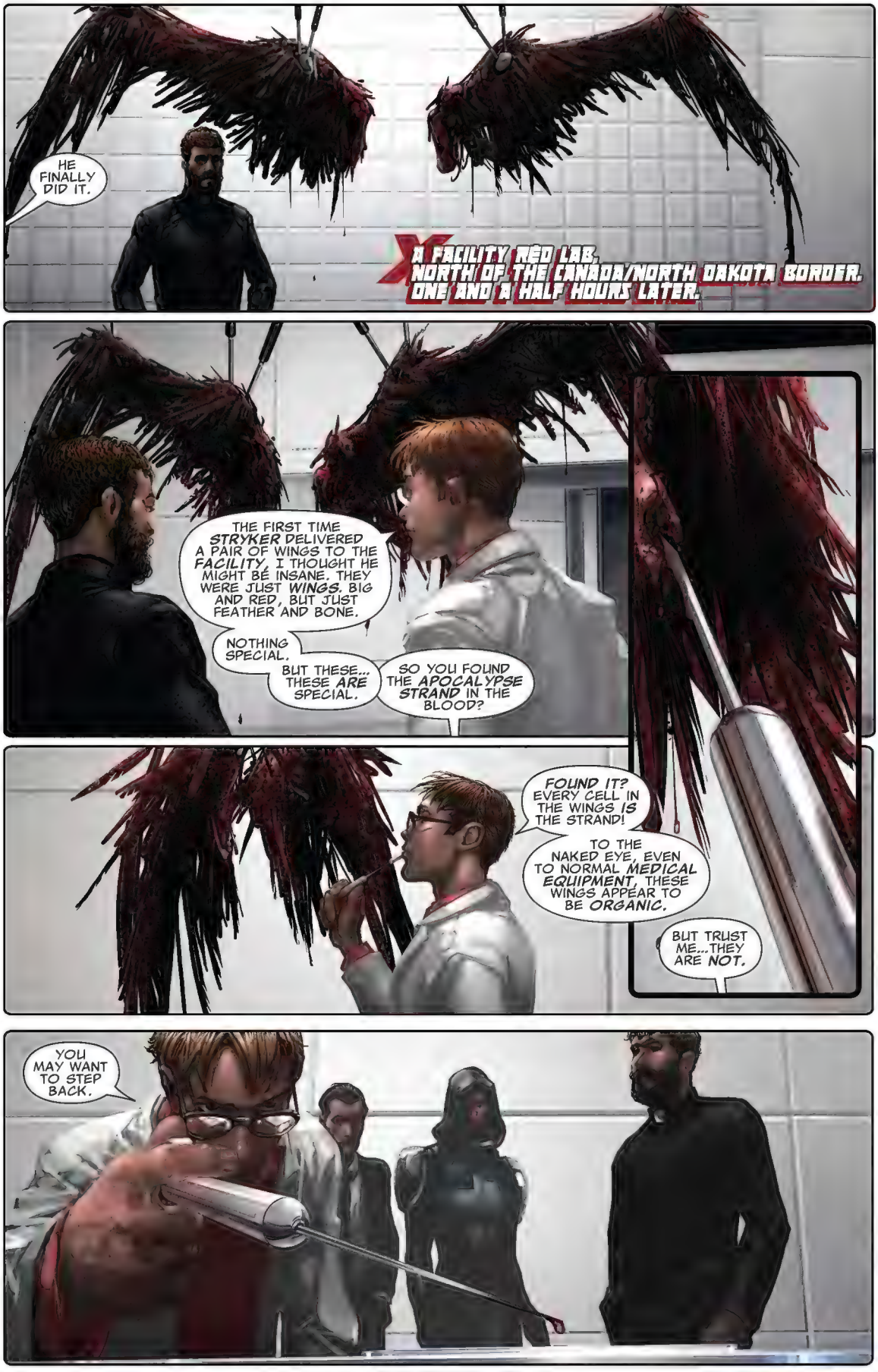
"SHE'S WHO WE SAVE...
SHRIP!
"SHE'S WHY WE RISK OUR LIVES...
RRRR!
CHUK!
"SHE'S WHO WE DIE FOR."
HURR... HURR...
I HAVE THE DEMON'S WINGS.
REVEREND CRAIG WILL BE PLEASED...

CHICAGO.
...PROCEED AS PLANNED.
BROTHER ELI, I NEED YOU TO RENDEZVOUS WITH SINCLAIR. TAKE HER TO THE FACILITY BASE--A MAN NAMED ADAM HARKIN WILL MEET YOU THERE.
HE'S IN CHARGE OF THE CHOIR AND WILL BE EXPECTING YOU.
AREN'T YOU COMING?
I'LL JOIN YOU AS SOON AS I CAN. I HAVE TO GET BACK TO THEM.
WHAT IS IT, MATTHEW RISMAN?
THE PURIFIER ARMY. THERE IS MUCH DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS THAT I MUST ATTEND TO.
INDEED. THE GROUNDWORK MUST BE LAID FOR WILLIAM STRYKER'S RETURN.
...
THE REVEREND. YES, OF COURSE.
SOON THE REVEREND WILL TAKE CONTROL OF THE PURIFIERS AGAIN, IN PREPARATION FOR "THE DAY."
YOU HAVE OUR INSTRUCTIONS?
YES, ORACLE.
THEN YOU ARE EXCUSED.

ST. LOUIS.
A S.H.I.E.L.D. FIELD OFFICE.
WHERE HAVE I SEEN THESE WOUNDS BEFORE?
AGENT MORALES!
PURIFIER ACTIVITY. WE GOT A HIT OFF AN INTERPOL SEARCH...BUT THESE ARE SEVERAL DAYS OLD.
DAYS? HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE? WE HAVE INTERPOL DATA BEFORE THEY DO.
IT...IT LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE WIPED THE DATA FROM THE S.H.I.E.L.D. MAINFRAME. SOMEONE ON THE INSIDE.
SECURITY CAMERAS IN A GUATEMALAN JAIL CAPTURED MULTIPLE PURIFIERS BREAKING OUT THE LEPER QUEEN.
AND TRAFFIC CAMERAS CAUGHT THIS... PURIFIERS CONVERGING ON A BUILDING IN PRAGUE, THE LAST KNOWN LOCATION OF DONALD PIERCE.
BASTION'S HEAD, AN ANTI-MUTANT MILITIA LEADER, AND AN OUTLAW CYBORG...
WHATEVER THE PURIFIERS ARE UP TO, I THINK THEY'RE JUST GETTING STARTED.

FOLEY!
SMAK!
FOLEY!!
I REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS APPROXIMATELY 7.2 MINUTES AFTER THE ASSAULT.
WOLVERINE AND WARPATH ARRIVE BEFORE MY LARYNX REFORMS.
HURKK!
YOU'VE GOT THREE SECONDS TO GET YOUR $#!^ TOGETHER, KID.
WHAT... WHAT HAP--
JOSH FOLEY, A.K.A. ELIXIR. HE WAS MY TEAMMATE AT THE XAVIER INSTITUTE, BEFORE CYCLOPS REASSIGNED ME.
TIME'S UP.
HANG ON... JUST HANG ON...
ANGEL...
I HAVE FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE OF HIS HEALING CAPABILITIES.
HNN...
ANGEL WILL SURVIVE.
WE SHOULD BE TRACKING WOLFSBANE RIGHT NOW.

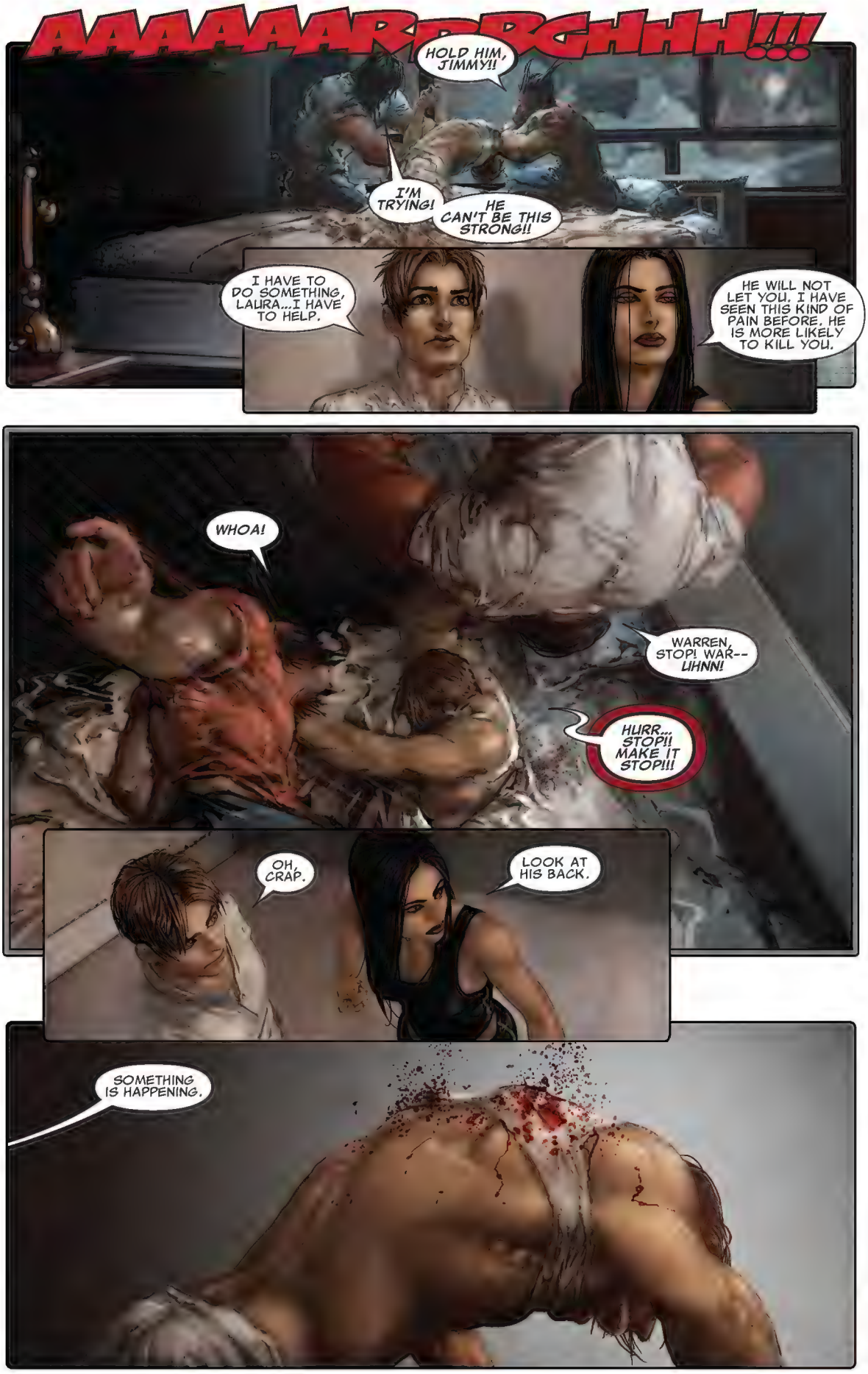
YOU WANNA TELL US EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
IT WAS RAHNE...SHE WOKE UP, AND...AND EVERYTHING WAS OKAY...
...BUT THEN SHE SAW ANGEL. AND THEN...OH, GOD...THEN SHE--
I'VE HEALED HIS NECK AND CHEST WOUNDS... BUT HIS WINGS...
I THINK WE CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT HAPPENED NEXT, FOLEY. IS WARREN GOING TO LIVE?
I'LL HAVE TO RE-GROW THEM.
"WAIT... SOMETHING'S WRONG."
"WHAT IS IT, JOSH?"
"ANGEL'S WINGS..."
...THE CELLS. THEY'RE NOT HUMAN, OR MUTANT. THEY'RE NOT EVEN ORGANIC...
MY POWERS-- THEY'RE NOT WORKING ON HIS WINGS. THE FOREIGN MATTER...IT'S BLOCKING ME.


HE FINALLY DID IT.
A FACILITY RED LAB. NORTH OF THE CANADA/NORTH DAKOTA BORDER. ONE AND A HALF HOURS LATER.
THE FIRST TIME STRYKER DELIVERED A PAIR OF WINGS TO THE FACILITY, I THOUGHT HE MIGHT BE INSANE. THEY WERE JUST WINGS. BIG AND RED, BUT JUST FEATHER AND BONE.
NOTHING SPECIAL.
BUT THESE... THESE ARE SPECIAL.
SO YOU FOUND THE APOCALYPSE STRAND IN THE BLOOD?
FOUND IT? EVERY CELL IN THE WINGS IS THE STRAND!
TO THE NAKED EYE, EVEN TO NORMAL MEDICAL EQUIPMENT, THESE WINGS APPEAR TO BE ORGANIC.
BUT TRUST ME...THEY ARE NOT.
YOU MAY WANT TO STEP BACK.

PLIP
LORD!
SHRACK!
WHEN THE CELLS RUN OUT OF BLOOD, THE GROWTH STOPS.
IT'S FANTASTIC.
HOW SOON CAN YOU HAVE THE TEST SUBJECT READY?
HOW SOON? I HAD HIM PREPPED BEFORE YOU LANDED. THE WAIT'S BEEN KILLING ME.

"YOU KNOW GABRIEL, OF COURSE. ONE OF YOUR 'SHEPHERDS.'
"HE'S VERY... COMMITTED."
I LIKE THAT ABOUT YOU PURIFIERS...THAT AND THE FACT THAT YOU'RE VERY PROMPT WITH PAYMENT.
BUT HONESTLY, TO PLAY WITH THIS KIND OF TECH? I WOULD HAVE DONE THE JOB FOR A SIGNIFICANT DISCOUNT.
PROCEED.
GABRIEL?
THIS MAY HURT A LITTLE.
PRAISE BE TO GOD.

COLORADO.
YEAARGGH!!!
REALLY?
IT DOESN'T HURT AT ALL?
NO, SIR.
I'M ALMOST DISAPPOINTED.
YOUR DNA IS BEING REWRITTEN BY WHAT LOOKS TO BE ALIEN TECHNOLOGY, GABRIEL.
I WAS EXPECTING A LITTLE... DISCOMFORT.


AAAAAARRRGHHH!!!
HOLD HIM, JIMMY!!
I'M TRYING!
HE CAN'T BE THIS STRONG!!
I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING, LAURA...I HAVE TO HELP.
HE WILL NOT LET YOU. I HAVE SEEN THIS KIND OF PAIN BEFORE. HE IS MORE LIKELY TO KILL YOU.
WHOA!
WARREN, STOP! WAR-- UHNN!
HURR... STOP!! MAKE IT STOP!!!
OH, CRAP.
LOOK AT HIS BACK.
SOMETHING IS HAPPENING.

AAAHH!!
I AM READY TO SERVE, FATHER.
YOU ARE THE FIRST OF OUR CHOIR, MY SON.
YOU WILL LEAD THE CHARGE IN STRIKING DOWN SATAN'S SPAWN WITH GOD'S OWN MIGHT.
NEED I ASK ABOUT THE REST, DOCTOR?
YOU WOUND ME, RISMAN.

MY GOD...
BEGIN THE INFUSIONS.
SHUK!
SHUK!
SHUK!
SHUK!
NOOOO!!

#^@%.
TALK TO ME, KID...WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?
I...I DON'T KNOW!

"WHATEVER'S DOING THIS TO HIM...IT'S NOT STOPPING...

"...IT'S GETTING WORSE."

WARREN WORTHINGTON III, A.K.A. ANGEL.
A.K.A. ARCHANGEL.
WOLVERINE DID NOT INCLUDE HIM IN THE LIST OF PEOPLE WE SHOULD DIE FOR.
BUT THAT MAY NOT MATTER...

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ANGEL'S AERIE. NOW.

I WAS CHOSEN BY GOD TO KILL MUTANTS.

THE LORD REACHED OUT TO ME THROUGH A MAN NAMED *WILLIAM STRYKER.*

NOBODY MOVE. DO YOU HEAR ME?

WARREN...WE DON'T WANT THIS, JUST RELAX AND LET THE KID HELP YOU...

HE WAS THE GREATEST MAN I HAVE EVER KNOWN.

WHAT THE $*%@ IS GOING ON HERE, LOGAN? WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO HIS WINGS?!

REVEREND STRYKER SAVED THE LIVES OF MY WIFE AND CHILD. HE SHOWED ME VISIONS OF THE FUTURE...

I CAN MAKE HIM SLEEP, I JUST HAVE TO GET CLOSE--

HE CAN MAKE YOU DIE FROM FAR AWAY.

...AND SET ME ON THE PATH TO MY DESTINY.

MY WINGS...I CAN FEEL THEM...

THEY TOOK MY WINGS!!!

YEARGH!!
THE REVEREND GAVE HIS LIFE TO SAVE HUMANITY FROM SATAN'S SPAWN, AND HE LEFT HIS CRUSADE IN MY HANDS.
RRRAAAA!!
SHLOK!!
FT!
FT!
I WAS GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS ON WHAT MUST BE DONE TO INSURE EDEN'S RETURN TO THE LORD, AND HOW TO KILL SATAN'S MUTANT ARMY.
GET DOWN!
AAAH!!
THUK!
THUK!
MY FIRST ORDER WAS TO PROTECT THE ORACLE, AS HE IS OUR ONLY CONNECTION TO THE FUTURE.
BUT LIKE OUR BELOVED REVEREND, THE ORACLE WAS CUT DOWN BY THE MUTANTS.
IT HURTS... OH, GOD, IT HURTS!!
WARREN!!
GET IT TOGETHER, MAN!! DON'T MAKE ME--
SO I SOUGHT A WAY TO RESTORE HIM AND REESTABLISH HIS CONNECTION WITH THE FUTURE. AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK IF NOT FOR BROTHER ELI.
WHOAAA!
ELI FOUND ME AND LED MY PURIFIERS TO THE MEANS NECESSARY TO INFUSE THE ORACLE WITH NEW LIFE...
AHHH!
HUHN!
BUT NOW THAT THE ORACLE HAS BEEN REBORN IN THE FORM OF BASTION, I FEAR WE MAY HAVE HANDED HUMANITY OVER TO A NEW EVIL.

MAKE IT STOP!!
ARRGH!!
JIMMY!!
SAFEGUARDING THE ORACLE WAS ONLY ONE OF THE TWO MISSIONS GIVEN TO ME BY REVEREND STRYKER...
MAKE IT STOP!!
THE OTHER WAS TO BUILD A CHOIR OF HUMAN ANGELS USING ALIEN TECHNOLOGY HIDDEN WITHIN THE ANGELIC WINGS OF AN UNKNOWN MUTANT.
OKAY, BUB. WHATEVER YOU WANT--
WARREN!!!
CRASH!!!
WE DISCOVERED TWO MUTANTS WITH FEATHERED WINGS, BUT IT WAS THE ONE CALLED "ANGEL" THAT HELD THE TECHNOLOGY WE NEEDED.

THE FACILITY.
NOW REVEREND STRYKER'S CHOIR AWAITS MY ORDERS AND READIES FOR THE COMING WAR.
MY NAME IS MATTHEW RISMAN AND TODAY I FIGHT FOR THE LORD...
AND FOR MY FRIEND, WILLIAM STRYKER.
BASTION HAS DEFILED THE REVEREND'S BODY WITH HIS TECHNO-ORGANIC PLAGUE AND HIS EVERY ACTION IS AN ASSAULT AGAINST OUR HOLY CRUSADE.
ORACLE OR NOT, HE MUST BE STOPPED. NOW.
MATTHEW, WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO?
FIRST, I WILL PUT WILLIAM'S SOUL TO REST.
THEN, I WILL DESTROY THE TECHNO-ORGANIC MONSTER BASTION CALLS "MAGUS."
AND THEN I WILL KILL THE ORACLE.
BROTHER ELI, I THANK YOU FOR YOUR LOYALTY, AND YOUR FAITH.
REVEREND CRAIG, YOU'VE SERVED THE LORD WELL. NOW I NEED YOU TO FINISH YOUR WORK AND RETURN WOLFSBANE TO SATAN.
I LOOK FORWARD TO OUR NEXT MEETING...HERE, OR IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.
MATTHEW...

MATTHEW, WAIT!!
I WANT TO COME WITH YOU.
ELI...BASTION HAS STRYKER, AND STRYKER COMMANDS THE PURIFIERS.
THE ONLY REASON THE CHOIR IS STILL FOLLOWING MY ORDERS IS BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW OF STRYKER'S "RESURRECTION."
I HAVE FAITH, BUT I AM ALSO A PRACTICAL MAN. WE MAY NOT BE COMING BACK.
I BROUGHT THIS EVIL ON YOU. I GAVE YOU BASTION'S LOCATION.
THIS IS MY RESPONSIBILITY.
ELI...
WE ARE BROTHERS, YOU SAID SO YOURSELF. WE SHOULD FINISH THIS FIGHT TOGETHER.
...
THANK YOU, ELI.
NOW COME...

"...OUR DESTINY AWAITS."

CHICAGO.
"WE CALLED HIM 'SON.' 'BROTHER.' 'FATHER.'
"BUT NOW HE IS LOST."
SEDUCED BY THE DEVIL.
HE HAS BETRAYED EVERYTHING WE HOLD SACRED.
EVER SINCE MY RESURRECTION, I'VE KNOWN OF THE JUDAS IN OUR MIDST.
THAT JUDAS IS MATTHEW RISMAN.
THAT JUDAS IS MATTHEW RISMAN.
NOW HE IS COMING TO KILL US ALL. TO DELIVER US UNTO SATAN.
NOW HE IS COMING TO KILL US ALL. TO DELIVER US UNTO SATAN!
MATTHEW RISMAN MUST BE STRUCK DOWN.
MATTHEW RISMAN MUST BE STRUCK DOWN.

THE FACILITY.
NO!
NNNN...
JOSH? WHAT... WHERE--?
WHY CAN'T I CHANGE--?
MY POWERS...
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? HOW--?
...
OH DEAR LORD, NO.

YE ARE SATAN'S SPAWN.
GIVE IN TO YUIR TRUE NATURE.
INSIDE YE IS THE BEAST.
LET IT OUT.
LET IT FEAST.
YE ARE EVIL THROUGH AND THROUGH, RAHNE SINCLAIR. YE KNOW THIS. YE HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN. NOW YE CAN LET IT OUT.
GIVE IN TO THE BEAST INSIDE YE.

PLEASE, LORD...PLEASE LET ME WAKE UP...
NONO NONONONO... PLEASE...I DIDN'T MEAN TO...
PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE...
HEAVENLY FATHER, PLEASE FORGIVE ME...
NAE. THERE IS NO FORGIVENESS FOR DEMONS.
THERE IS ONLY WRATH.

OVER MID-AMERICA.
I KNOW WE'RE IN A @#$%ING JET, BUT IF HE GOES ANY FASTER, WE'RE GONNA LOSE HIM.
RRRRRRRRRRAAAAA!
HE'S TURNING.
STAY ON HIM, JIMMY...
I GOT IT.
HE WAS PREVIOUSLY HEADING NORTH-NORTHEAST, NOW HE IS HEADING DUE EAST.
HIS TARGET IS MOVING.
THE PURIFIERS MADE RAHNE TAKE HIS WINGS.
EVEN MONEY SAYS WARREN'S GOING AFTER THEM.

THE REVEREND WILLIAM STRYKER LEFT US TO FINISH HIS CRUSADE...
BUT TO THIS, WE MUST FIGHT EVERY BATTLE THE LORD SETS BEFORE US.
TODAY, WE FACE A BETRAYER WITHIN OUR OWN RANKS AND ONCE HE IS DEAD, NOTHING WILL PROTECT THE MUTANTS FROM GOD'S WRATH.
GABRIEL, DO YOU COPY?
YES, FATHER?
WE'RE APPROACHING THE SITE NOW. THEY'LL HAVE EYES IN PLACE ON THE ROOF.
BLIND THEM.
UNDERSTOOD.
MICHAEL, DANIEL...CLEAR A PATH.

SWO
LIT!
HR!

WH-WHY DID YOU MAKE ME HURT MY FRIENDS?
WHY HAVE YOU DONE THIS TO ME?
BECAUSE YE TWISTED MY THOUGHTS...YE MADE ME BELIEVE THAT YUIR EVIL WAS IN ME.
BUT THE TRUTH IS YE ARE THE DEVIL'S DAUGHTER...
SATAN IS YUIR FATHER, AND I AM YUIR EXECUTIONER.
BLAM
AAAAHHH!
CHK!

THUD!
HNN!!
HNN...I'M... SORRY...ALL I...NN!!
...ALL I EVER WANTED... WAS YOUR... LOVE...
...NOT THIS...
RRRRRRR
AAAHHH!
RAAA!!
NO!! YE WON'T FIND SALVATION THAT WAY!
THERE IS NOTHING LEFT FOR YE BUT ETERNAL DAMNATION!

I WALK AMONG MY FALLEN BROTHERS, LED TO THEIR GRAVES BY THE LIES OF THE ORACLE.
HIS UNHOLY ATROCITIES NOT ONLY ENDANGER THE LIVES OF EVERY GOD-FEARING MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD ON THE PLANET...
...BUT OUR VERY SOULS.
A PRICE TOO HIGH TO PAY FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF SATAN'S ARMY...
BUT AN EASY SACRIFICE FOR ONE WITHOUT A SOUL.
BASTION.

A WORD, IF YOU WILL.

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CHICAGO, 14 HOURS AGO.
"OKAY, LOGAN TAKE ME THROUGH IT AGAIN."
"LIKE I SAID, SUMMERS... I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE WE GOT THERE, BUT WHATEVER WENT DOWN...
"...IT WAS REAL @#$%ING BAD."
STAND DOWN, MATTHEW RISMAN. THIS WILL ACCOMPLISH NOTHING. OUR END GOAL IS THE SAME...PRESERVATION OF HUMANITY AGAINST THE MUTANT THREAT.
YOU'RE WRONG, BASTION. WE'RE NOTHING ALIKE. BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT HUMAN.
"MY GUESS IS THAT RISMAN WAS IN SOME KIND OF FIGHT TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OF THE PURIFIERS..."
THEY'RE NOT HUMAN.
"AND HE WAS LOSING THAT FIGHT... BADLY."
THOSE UNHOLY ABOMINATIONS YOU'VE CREATED WILL BE DESTROYED.
BUT NOT BEFORE YOU FACE THE WRATH OF GOD'S CHOIR.
"AND THINGS WERE ABOUT TO GET A LOT WORSE FOR HIM."
CRASH!!!
WHAT IN--?

"NOW, I DIDN'T GET MUCH INFO FROM ANGEL WHEN HE WAS TRYING TO KILL US, BUT I DID KNOW WHAT HE WAS AFTER..."
RRYYAAA!!
"...HIS WINGS."
ELI, MOVE!!
GIVE THEM BACK!!
"AND SOMEHOW HE KNEW THE PURIFIERS HAD 'EM."
AHHARRGHH!!
AAAIIEEEE!!
GIVE THEM BACK!!

"WHEN HE FINALLY CAUGHT UP TO THEM, HE HAD ABOUT FIFTY SETS TO CHOSE FROM."
FATHER... IS THAT...IS THAT ONE OF US?
NO...SATAN IS PLAYING HIS TRICKS. IT'S WORTHINGTON. HE'S A MUTANT, GABRIEL...
KILL HIM.
"AND BY THE LOOKS OF THINGS...
"...HE WANTED THEM ALL."
AAAAHH!
CHOK!
NYEARGHH!!
SHLUK!!
THE X-MEN ARE COMING FOR YOU, MATTHEW RISMAN. WE TOLD YOU ALREADY HOW THIS WOULD END.
I'VE MADE MY PEACE WITH GOD. I'M READY TO DIE.
BUT YOU GO FIRST!

"LUCKY FOR US, THESE GUYS WERE SO FOCUSED ON KILLING EACH OTHER, THEY DIDN'T SEE US COMING."
SHRACK!!
RRRRRRAAAA!!
<<<SQUARRRRKK>>>
"BUT THAT DIDN'T CHANGE THE FACT WE WERE IN OVER OUR HEADS."
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE? WHO ARE THESE GUYS? IS THAT...IS THAT BASTION?!
FORTY-EIGHT TARGETS, INCLUDING AIRBORNE.
GREAT, SO WHAT'S THE PLAN?
SIXTEEN APIECE.
KILL 'EM ALL.

THE FACILITY.
"SO, WHILE WE WERE FIGHTING BASTION AND A $#!%LOAD OF FLYING PURIFIERS..."
SATAN'S SPAWN CAN NEVER HIDE FROM THE RIGHTEOUS!
"...RAHNE WAS BATTLING HER OWN DEMONS."
"WE KNOW REVEREND CRAIG JOINED THE PURIFIERS IN ORDER TO LURE RAHNE INTO A TRAP."
YUIR TAINTED BLOOD BETRAYS YE.
NOW I CAN FINALLY FINISH WHAT MOIRA MACTAGGERT STOPPED ME FROM DOING SO LONG AGO!
"AND ONCE HE CAPTURED HER, THE PURIFIERS PROGRAMMED RAHNE TO CHEW OFF WARREN'S WINGS."
COME OUT, DEMON!
"BUT THAT WASN'T THE SICKEST PART OF THIS WHOLE DEAL...
COME OUT SO I CAN--
EH?

"THE SICKEST PART IS THAT CRAIG ONLY AGREED TO DO WHAT THE PURIFIERS WANTED IF HE WAS ALLOWED TO KILL RAHNE WHEN IT WAS OVER."
GRRRRAAL!
AAAH!!
WHAM!
UHN!!
YOU DARE CALL ME A DEMON AFTER WHAT YOU'VE DONE?!
YOU TOOK GOD'S WORD AND TWISTED IT, YOU TOOK SOMETHING PURE AND HOLY AND USED IT TO JUSTIFY TORTURE AND MURDER.

YOU ARE THE DEMON, NOT ME.
I NEVER WANTED ANY OF THIS. I NEVER WANTED TO HURT YOU.
I ONLY CAME AFTER YOU TO SAVE YOU FROM THE PURIFIERS.
I CAME BECAUSE YOU ARE MY FATHER...AND BECAUSE PART OF ME STILL LOVED YOU.
BUT NOW, AFTER WHAT YOU'VE DONE... AFTER WHAT YOU MADE ME DO...
I WILL NEVER FORGIVE YOU.
KA-CHAK
YE ARE SATAN'S DAUGHTER, NOT MINE!!

AND IT IS TIME YE RETURN TO HIM!
:GASP:
KILL THE ANGEL.
RRRAAAAA!!
AAAAHHH!!

"BACK AT THE HANGAR, ANGEL WAS SLICING UP THOSE FLYING PURIFIERS AT A PRETTY GOOD CLIP AND FOR A MOMENT, IT FELT LIKE WARREN WAS ON OUR SIDE."
SHUK
AACK!!
"GOOD THING, TOO, BECAUSE X-23 AND WARPATH WERE HAVING A HELL OF A TIME MAKING A DENT IN THEIR NUMBERS FROM THE GROUND."
GUH!!
CHOK!
SHTH!
AAAIIEEE!!
"BUT IT WASN'T FOR LACK OF TRYING."
THUD!
THUD!
SNFF
RISMAN.
XI? X, WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
AAARGHH!
CHUK!
"NOW THIS IS WHERE THINGS GET WEIRD.

"REMEMBER HOW I SAID I THOUGHT RISMAN WAS IN SOME KIND OF POWER STRUGGLE?"
MAGUS!!! TIME TO FACE THE WRATH OF--
"TURNS OUT IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN JUST WITH BASTION."
...ELI?
MATTHEW. I HOPED YOU MIGHT FIND ME.
DEAR GOD... ELI, GET AWAY FROM THAT CREATURE!
THERE IS NO GOD, YOU FOOL...THERE'S ONLY DEATH.
AND SHE IS MY QUEEN.

NO... NO!!
BLAM!
THAT WASN'T VERY NICE.
I TRUSTED YOU! I BELIEVED IN YOU!!!
THAT WAS A MISTAKE...ONE OF MANY YOU'VE MADE.
I WAS GOING TO MAKE AN OFFERING OF YOU AND YOUR ENTIRE PURIFIER ARMY. YOUR SOULS WERE TO BE REAPED AS SUSTENANCE FOR MY BELOVED...
BUT ONCE I SAW WHAT THIS CREATURE WAS CAPABLE OF, I CHANGED MY PLANS.
NOW YOU'RE JUST GOING TO DIE.
GOD... FORGIVE ME...

"WE DIDN'T FIND OUT MUCH ABOUT THE MYSTERY MAN THAT WAS TRYING TO KILL RISMAN...
BLAM!!
"...BECAUSE LAURA GOT TO THE SCENE FIRST.
MATTHEW?
"SHE PUT ONE ROUND IN RISMAN'S HEAD AND THREE ROUNDS IN THIS OTHER GUY...
BLAM!! BLAM!! BLAM!!
"...BUT THE BULLETS WENT RIGHT THROUGH HIM.
"OR HE WENT RIGHT THROUGH THEM... EITHER WAY, THIS GUY SURE AS HELL WASN'T A PURIFIER."
SSSS...

I SHOULD JUST KILL YOU NOW FOR DENYING ME MATTHEW'S SOUL...
...BUT I CAN'T RESIST THE MEAL YOUR HEALING FACTOR OFFERS.
SO MUCH LIFE TO OFFER... AND NOW WITH MAGUS BONDED TO ME, I HAVE TWO MOUTHS TO FEED.
NNYEAURGHH!
HK!!
I'LL BRING YOU TO THE BRINK OF DEATH AND THEN YOU'LL COME BACK TO ME.
HNNNNN...
AGAIN. AND AGAIN. AND AGAIN...
THOK!
AAAHH!

"FORTUNATELY, THAT'S ABOUT THE TIME JIMMY SHOWED UP."
DROP HER, OR YOU'RE DEAD.
TOO LATE. I'M ALREADY DEAD, APACHE.
KILL... HIM...
I'VE KILLED MORE OF YOUR KIND THAN SMALLPOX, JAMES PROUDSTAR...
...AND YOU'VE JUST MADE THIS PERSONAL.
YOU OKAY?
YEAH...
DID...DID I COMPLETE MY MISSION?
...YOU DID GOOD, LAURA.
NOW LET'S GET YOU OUT OF HERE.

"I DIDN'T GET AN EXACT COUNT OF HOW MANY PURIFIERS WARREN TOOK OUT..."
"FROM THE SNARES OF THE DEVIL, DELIVER US, OH LORD."
"BUT WE DIDN'T FIND ANY LEFT ALIVE."
DO NOT FALTER.
DO NOT FEAR.
GABRIEL... WE MUST GO...
GABRIEL... HE IS COMING.
"OR IN ONE PIECE, FOR THAT MATTER."
THE ANGEL OF DEATH IS COMING FOR US.
GOD SAVE OUR SOULS.
"SO, IF ANY OF THEM GOT OUT, I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT IT...

"...I HAD MY HANDS FULL."
SHRACK!
STAY! DOWN!
"THE WHOLE TIME, THE ONLY QUESTION THAT RAN THROUGH MY HEAD WAS HOW MANY TIMES DO WE HAVE TO KILL THESE BASTARDS BEFORE THEY STAY DEAD?"
YOUR SPECIES HAS BROUGHT THIS ON ITSELF, WOLVERINE. EVERY ONE OF YOU HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DESTROY HUMANITY...
...AND THAT WE CANNOT ALLOW.
ARRGH!!
WE PLANNED ON YOUR TEAM KILLING MATTHEW RISMAN, BUT THIS CONFRONTATION IS PREMATURE.
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU CAME BACK, BUB, AND I DON'T CARE. CUZ I'M GONNA SEND YOU BACK TO WHATEVER ROBOT HELL YOU CAME FROM.

"NOW I'VE SEEN A LOT OF @#$%ED UP STUFF IN MY DAY, BUT THIS...
"THIS I COULDN'T BELIEVE."
NO...
"IT WAS LIKE SEEING EVERY SKELETON IN THE X-MEN CLOSET BACK FROM THE DEAD."
NO @#$%ING WAY.
"THAT SAID, I REALLY SHOULD HAVE KEPT MY FOCUS ON BASTION."
KRA-KOOM!

SHOOOOOOM!
HNNN!
NYEAARGGHH!
'RRRRRRRR DEAD!!
YOU'RE DEAD!!
DO YOU HEAR ME?!
DO YOU HEAR ME?!!
RISK ANALYSIS...

...UNACCEPTABLE.
DAMMIT!
PROBLEM, BASTION?
YES. WE ARE ABANDONING THIS BASE, CAMERON HODGE.
WILLIAM STRYKER, PREPARE FOR TAKEOFF.
OF COURSE, BASTION.
COME ON, COME ON, MOVE DAMMIT!
MOVE!! MO--
"IN THE END WE TOOK OUT RISMAN...

"...BUT THERE'S A CRAP LOAD OF TROUBLE THAT GOT AWAY."
DAMN BUT YOU SMELL, OLD MAN.
YES. VERY BAD.
SHUT UP, BOTH OF YOU, AND TAKE A GOOD LOOK.
THIS IS WHAT YOU SIGNED UP FOR.
THIS IS YOUR LIFE NOW, AND THE BLOOD NEVER COMES OFF.
NOW WHERE IS HE?
OVER THERE...BUT YOU'RE NOT GONNA BELIEVE IT.
AFTER WHAT I'VE SEEN TODAY, DON'T BE SO SURE.
OKAY, I TAKE IT BACK.
"SEEING ALL THE ENEMIES I THOUGHT WE'D BEATEN AND BURIED BACK IN THE FLESH IS SOMETHING I WON'T FORGET ANYTIME SOON.

"JUST LIKE SEEING WARREN LYING ON TOP OF A BLOODY PILE OF MURDER HE COMMITTED.
"THESE ARE THINGS I JUST NEVER CONTEMPLATED.

"BUT IT'S THE IMAGE OF RAHNE, SOAKED IN THE BLOOD OF HER FATHER, PRAYING FOR FORGIVENESS, THAT I CAN'T SHAKE."
THERE IS NO SIN SO TERRIBLE THAT GOD'S LOVE CANNOT FORGIVE...
"SHE WON'T TALK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED...HELL, SHE WON'T TALK AT ALL."
THERE IS NO SIN SO TERRIBLE THAT GOD'S LOVE CANNOT FORGIVE...
"BUT WE DIDN'T FIND A BODY...JUST A LOT OF BLOOD AND THE OLD BASTARD'S CLOTHES."
THERE IS NO SIN SO TERRIBLE THAT GOD'S LOVE CANNOT FORGIVE...
"GOD HELP HER ONCE THE SHOCK WEARS OFF..."
THERE IS NO SIN...
"...AND SHE REMEMBERS WHAT SHE DID."
THERE IS NO...

AS FOR WORTHINGTON, HE DIDN'T HAVE A SCRATCH ON HIM, LIKE IT NEVER HAPPENED.
"BUT HE SAID THAT THOSE WINGS ARE STILL INSIDE HIM...AND THAT THEY WANT TO COME OUT AGAIN.
"ELIXIR CONFIRMED. HE'S CHANGED, FOR GOOD.
"SINCLAIR'S HEALED UP NOW. PHYSICALLY, SHE'S FINE.
HER HURT IS DEEPER THAN THAT.
WE'LL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN FOR RAHNE AND WARREN.
BUT WE CAN'T STOP WHAT WE'VE STARTED. NOT AFTER WHAT YOU'VE JUST TOLD ME.
AND YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHO KILLED THE TECHNARCH? THE MAN WARPATH AND X-23 SAW?
THEN I'VE ONLY GOT ONE MORE QUESTION TO ASK.
X-23 HEARD THE NAME "ELI" BEFORE EVERYTHING WENT SIDEWAYS. THAT'S ALL WE'VE GOT.

WHO'S NEXT?
NEXT: OLD GHOSTS.

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